GENDER ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS IN KAZAKSTAN

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Signature .....

Date ....6.:.10.:.2005.....

CONTENTS

		page
Abstract		*iv.*
Acknowledgements		*v.*
Note on terminology and transliteration		*vi.*
Glossary and acronyms		*vii.*
Figures and tables		*xi.*
Map		*xii.*
Introduction	Origins and Background to the Research	1
	Methodological considerations	8
	Structure of the thesis	12
Chapter One	**The Objectives and Method in Context**	**15**
Chapter Two	**The Accommodation of Soviet Development and Indigenous Society**	**37**
	I. The indigenous Kazak economy	38
	II. The Soviet model of development	50
	III. The outcome of Soviet modernisation	58
	IV. Profiles of the research communities	61
	V. The rural gender contract	72
Chapter Three	**Gendering the Postsocialist Framing of Development**	**86**
	I. Gender, state-building and nationalism	86
	II. The framing of (economic) development	98
Chapter Four	**The Framing of Rural Development**	**113**
	I. Rural development as privatisation	113
	II. Social and cultural issues in farm restructuring	121
	III. Gender issues in farm restructuring	122
Chapter Five	**A View from the Grassroots: Experiences and Perceptions of Farm Restructuring in Three Rural Communities**	**128**
	I. Working backwards: Reading the post-privatisation landscape	128
	II. Defining land and property entitlements: Analysis of the farm privatisation process	137
	III. Gender, information and 'staying together': a case study of *sovkhoz* Lenin	156
	IV. Gender and private farming on Druzhba and Sarybulak	167
	V. Conclusions	183
Chapter Six	**The Broader Meaning of Privatisation**	**187**
	I. Complicating the private enterprise model: case study of a private farm	188
	II. Restructuring and the emergence of a new market sphere	197
	III. Restructuring and the collapse of the public sphere	199

Chapter Seven	**Restructuring and the Rural Gender Contract**	213
	I. Changing forms and meanings of labour, value and social networks	214
	II. Gender and local constructions of the marketplace	215
	III. Gender and the turn to subsistence	223
Chapter Eight	**Conclusions**	**231**
Appendix 1: Demographic profiles of the research communities		*240*
Appendix 2: Extracts from life histories		*245*
Appendix 3: Selective list of legislation on agrarian reform and farm restructuring		*253*
Appendix 4: Statistics on farm privatisation		*254*
Bibliography		*257*

1.Government, donor organisation and NGO reports and papers
2. Academic sources
a) Russian language
b) English, French and German
Unpublished
Published

Abstract

The research on which this thesis is based investigated the significance of gender in the agrarian reform and farm restructuring process which has been conducted in Kazakhstan since 1991. Through detailed ethnographic study of rural communities, it explored how the macro level framing of rural development policy as privatisation was impacting on gender relations at micro level and how gender was interwoven with the emerging patterns of social and economic stratification.

The thesis argues that farm privatisation has been a gendered process. On one level, taking 'privatisation' in a primary sense, as a planned programme of structural change, the redistribution of land and assets is having specific consequences for women in terms of entitlement and property rights. On another level, privatisation can also be understood in a second, broader, sense, as a shift in the balance between public (state) and private (domestic) spheres. From this perspective, the corollary of the withdrawal of the state as a provider of employment and services in rural areas is that households are increasingly reliant for survival on the 'private' resources of family, kin and social networks of various kinds. Local ideas about gender roles, that I term the 'rural gender contract', have been instrumental in shaping how women and men have been affected by and reacted to these changes. At the same time, the 'rural gender contract' itself has been challenged by them.

The thesis thereby contributes to the emerging anthropological literature on postsocialist societies, which explores how communities and individuals are experiencing radical transformation and how their reactions are shaping local strategies and economies in ways often unforeseen by policy makers.

Acknowledgements

Above all, to my host families and the people of the former state farms, for their hospitality and for sharing so much of their lives at a very difficult time. Also, to my family, for their support over the long process of research and writing and especially my son, Jemmy, whose birth in 2002 inspired me to persevere to the end. At academic level, enormous thanks to my supervisors, Dr Robert Kowalski and Dr Frances Pine and to Prof. Neil Malcolm and Marta Bruno, who were also involved from the early stages. Finally, to all those who discussed and commented on the various drafts and the emerging aspects of the research.

Note on Terminology and Transliteration

My transliteration of Russian and Kazak words into English follows the US Library of Congress system. Contemporary Kazak uses a modified form of the cyrillic alphabet adopted in 1940. For the Kazak letters that do not appear in the Russian cyrillic alphabet, I have used the transliteration system in Edward Allworth, ed. *Nationalities of the Soviet East. Publications and Writing Systems*. (NY and London: Columbia University Press, 1971: 332). The official international latinised name of the country is now Kazakstan and I have followed this spelling rather than the more usual Kazakhstan or Kazakh. However, since I am not a Kazak linguist and since most of the local sources cited are in Russian, I have used the conventional Russian spellings for some place names and terms - for example, Karaganda instead of Qarag·andy. Lastly, for some recurring terms, such as *oblast'*, I have removed the final soft sign (').

Glossary and acronyms

Kazak terms are marked with a *

Akim*	Head of oblast, rayon or village administration.
Akimiat*	Local authority. At village level, this term replaced the Soviet one of sel'sovet (village council).
aqsaqal*	Kazak term (literally, 'white beard') referring to male elders
at*	Feast commemorating a death
aul*	Kazak settlement, referring both to a herding encampment and a small, rural settlement, such as part of a state farm.
arendatory	Local term for private farmers
babushka	grandmother, old lady.
bai*	In pre-soviet Kazak society, aul or clan leader; now used to refer to wealthy villagers, such as private farmers with large holdings.
baibishe*	Senior wife
bardak*	Collapse and chaos
baursaq*	Kazak bread
besbarmak*	Traditional dish of horsemeat or mutton and pasta, served during feasts
blat	The use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures
chastniki	Local word for private farmers
chelnoki	'Shuttle-traders': (mainly) women, who travel to larger towns or abroad to buy cheap goods to resell at higher prices.
chernaya kassa	work-collective-based women's credit groups
dedushka (ded)	grandfather, old man
enshi*	Share in inheritance of household property and livestock
ferma	outlying section of a state farm
glasnost'	policy of openness launched in the USSR in the 1980s
Goskomzem	State Committee for Land Relations and Land Management
Gosudarsvennyi Akt na Zemlyu	official land certificate

gulyanka	office party
imushchestvennyi pai	share of assets
kalym*	bride wealth
khozyain	owner, head of household, husband
khozyaika	owner, mistress of the house, wife
kokteu*	Spring pasture
kolkhoz	collective farm
kollektiv	Russian term for a work collective, used to refer to both the entire workforce of an enterprise, such as a state farm, and to its individual subdivisions
kommertsanty	traders
kontora	state farm office
krestyanskoe khozyaistvo	independent, private (peasant) farm
kulak	a prosperous Russian peasant
kupi-prodazh	buying cheap to sell dear
kuzin*	Autumn pasture
liman	hayland
nachalstvo	Senior officials, may refer to national government, farm management or local officials
oblast'	an administrative region or province
ogorod	vegetable plot
otdeleniye	Former section of a state farm, combining production and settlement; in some cases these corresponded to villages or Kazak settlements (auls) that existed prior to collectivisation.
pai	share (of land or assets)
parandja*	Heavy horsehair veil worn in Central Asia that covered women from head to foot
perestroika	Policy of restructuring launched in the USSR in the 1980s
Pervyi Zvonok	Celebration of the first day of the new school year
pominki	Commemoration of forty days and a year after a death

rod	clan
qistau	Winter pasture
rayon	An administrative district
sarai hayloft	Part of domestic smallholding, including barn or animal shed and
sauyn*	Arrangement whereby poorer households herded livestock for richer ones, in return for milk, fleece or a share of the young animals.
sel'sovet	Village council (Soviet era) now akimiat.
shanyrak*	Sacred smoke-hole wheel at the centre of the yurt frame.
snokha	daughter-in-law
sovkhoz	state farm
sviditel'stvo	share certificate
tenge*	Kazakhstan's national currency, introduced in November 1993. 1 tenge: 100 tyn.
tetya	auntie
toikhana*	Equivalent of a village hall, where parties and feasts could be held.
Tselina	Virgin Lands Campaign, launched by Krushchev
uru*	Kazakh lineage
vyzhivanie	survival
yurt	A circular, collapsible felt tent, with wooden frame, used by Central Asian nomads
zemel'nyi pai	share of land
zhasau*	dowry
zhataki* their own.	Members of a Kazak aul community with no land or livestock of
zhaylau *	Summer pasture
zhuz* three	Large territorial and tribal division of Kazaks, of which there are
zimovka	Winter quarters for herders; semi-subterranean dwelling.

Acronyms

ACDI/VOCA	A US-based private non-profit development organization formed in 1997 from the merger of two companies, Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance.
ADB	Asian Development Bank
A.O.	*Aktsionnernoye obshchestvo*, joint stock company
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU TACIS	European Union programme of Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia
GAD	gender and development
HIVOS	The Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, The Netherlands
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	American Agency for International Development
WID	Women In Development

Figures and Tables

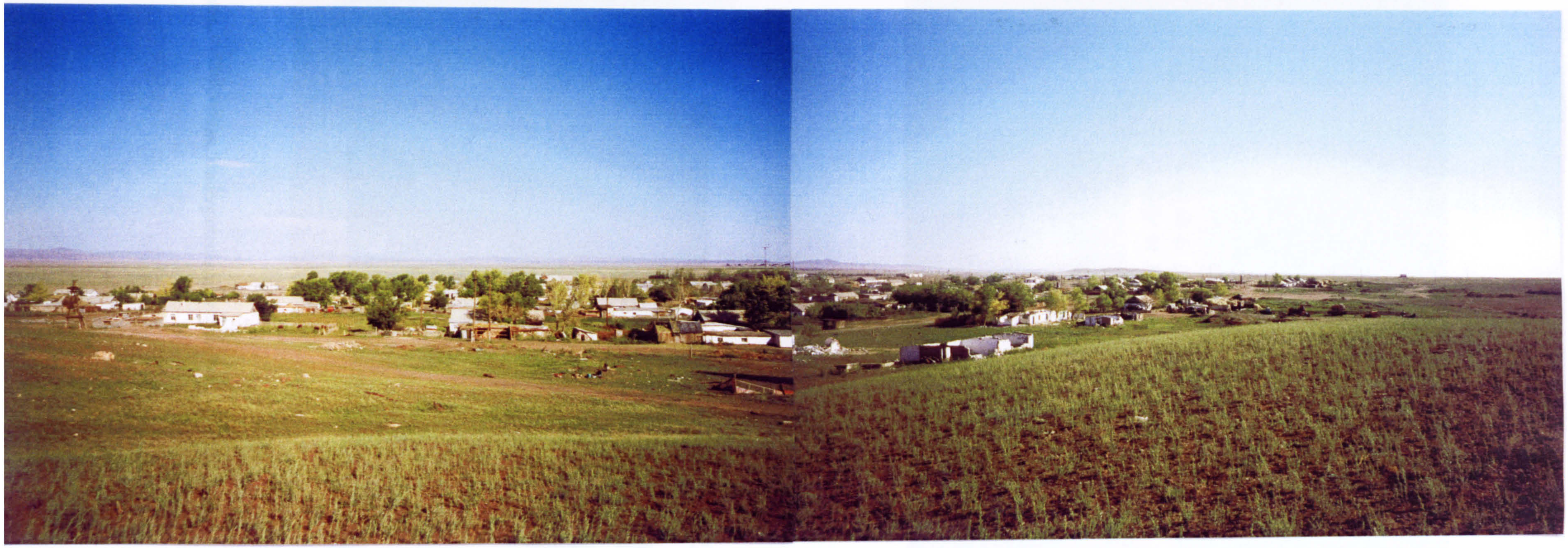
Figures page

1.1 Agricultural Output between 1997 and 2000 23
1.2 Share of Oil and Non-Oil Sectors in GDP Growth 23
1.3 State Budget Spending on Agriculture 23
2.1 Administrative and Production Structure of Sovkhoz Lenin during the late Soviet Period 63
2.2. Key characteristics of the Sarybulak, Lenin and Druzhba state farms 68
2.3. Metaphors for gender domains 83
7.1 Activities relating to 'sitting at home' 225
7.2 Women's perceptions of the loss of waged work 226

Tables

1.1 Key agricultural indicators 23
4.1 State procurement of agricultural products 1980-1995 119
5.1 Gender composition of private farming on Druzhba 136
5.2 Share allocation on Kolyashchi *otdeleniye* (agricultural workers) 141
5.3 Share allocation to agricultural and social sector workers on Miinbulak *sovkhoz* 143
5.4 Share allocation to employees in the Kolyashchi village school 143
5.5 Druzhba: figures on male and female employees on private farms 181


RUSSIA
Yaroslavl'
Kirov
Nizhniy Novgorod
Perm'
Nizhniy Tagil
Izhevsk
Yekaterinburg
Kazan'
Tyumen'
Ul'yanovsk
Ufa
Kurgan
Penza
Chelyabinsk
Samara
Petropavlovsk
SOLTUSTIK QAZAQSTAN
Qostanay (Kostanay)
Kökshetaū (Kokshetau)
Magnitogorsk
Saratov
Volgograd
Orenburg
Rūdnyy (Rudnyy)
Pavlodar
Oral (Ural'sk)
Aqsay (Aksay)
Orsk
Atbasar
Esil (Yesil')
Ekibastuz
AQMOLA
Astana
BATYS QAZAQSTAN
Aqtöbe (Aktobe)
Arqalyq (Arkalyk)
Temirtaū (Temirtau)
Semey (Semipalatinsk)
Öskemen (Ust'-Kamenogorsk)
Qaraghandy (Karaganda)
SHYGHYS QAZAQSTAN
Maqat (Makat)
Embi (Emba)
Ayaköz (Ayagoz)
Zaysan
Atyrau (Atyrau)
Shalqar (Chelkar)
Tacheng
Astrakhan'
Zhezqazghan (Zhezkazgan)
Balqash (Balkhash)
Lake Balkhash
Aral (Aral'sk)
Saryshaghan (Saryshagan)
Lepsi (Lepsy)
Beyneu (Beyneu)
Taldyqorghan (Taldykorgan)
Ürümqi
Makhachkala
MANGGHYSTAŪ
Aqtaū (Aktau)
*Bayqongyr (Baykonyr)
Qyzylorda (Kyzylorda)
ONGTÜSTIK QAZAQSTAN
ZHAMBYL
Qapshaghay (Kapchagay)
Zharkent
Yining
Zhangatas (Zhanatas)
Shū (Shu)
Almaty
CHINA
Türkistan (Turkestan)
Taraz
Bishkek
Korla
Nukus
Shymkent
Balykchy
Kuqa
AZER.
Baku
Caspian Sea
Uchquduq
KYRGYZSTAN
Daşoguz
Urganch
UZBEKISTAN
Tashkent
Türkmenbaşy
Balkanabat
Navoiy
Khujand
Osh
Buxoro
TURKMENISTAN
Samarqand
TAJIKISTAN
Türkmenabat
Qarshi
Rasht
Ashgabat
Dushanbe
Mary
Atamyrat
Khorugh
Termiz
Qürghonteppa
Garagum Kanaly
Tehrān
Mashhad
Mazār-e Sharīf
Qom
Gushgy
IRAN
AFGHANISTAN
Kabul
Eşfahān
Herāt
Islāmābād
Yazd
Bīrjand
Daryā-ye Helmand
PAKISTAN
Kandahār
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.
Kazakhstan
International boundary
Oblysy boundary
National capital
Oblysy capital
Railroad
Road
An oblysy is named only when its name differs from that of its administrative center.
The cities of Almaty, Astana, and Bayqongyr have status equal to that of an oblysy.
*Bayqongyr and the Baykonur space launch facilities are leased to Russia until 2015.
0 200 400 Kilometers
0 200 400 Miles
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection, SP 37 N / 55 N
Base 802515AI (C00217) 12-01



Sovkhoz Lenin, central village, 1998

Sovkhoz Lenin, central village, kindergarten and private shop, 1998

Sovkhoz Lenin : *Otdeleniye*, November 1996

Sovkhoz Sarybulak: *Zhaylau*, 1998

Sovkhoz Druzhba, woman farmer at weekly market; daily market, 1998.

Preparations for *pominki, pominki*, 1998

INTRODUCTION

Origins and background to the research

Kazakstan, like the other new states which emerged from the break-up of the former Soviet Union, is undergoing a period of rapid change and transformation. On the one hand, at a macro level, the government is implementing a programme of economic and political reform, alongside the processes of state-building and renegotiation of a place on the world stage. On the other hand, at a micro-level, people are experiencing change in terms of the disappearance of familiar structures and the emergence of - or opportunity to create - new ones, the transformation of social and economic relations and the disruption of work, education, leisure and other patterns of daily life. Change can therefore be conceptualised both as a programme of rapid and radical social, economic and political transformation, planned from above, and as responses to this from below.

Seventy years before, the region had experienced a period of equally radical change, fuelled by different ideologies, as the Bolshevik regime sought to 'modernise' or 'develop' the indigenous, largely pastoral and transhumant Kazak society, and incorporate it into the Soviet state. One of the central planks of Bolshevik ideology and practice in Kazakstan, as elsewhere in Central Asia, was the will to change traditional gender relations, specifically to emancipate women from oppression within the family in order to participate fully in public life.

What had been the results of this policy, from the perspective of seventy years on? And what would be the impact of the new development model on gender relations at micro level? These were two of the questions that brought me to Kazakstan for my first field visit in early 1996 with the aim of scouting out the territory and assessing whether the country would be a suitable focus for my research.

Before describing this and the other field visits in more detail, I would like to back track a little to the genesis of the project as a whole. My doctoral thesis was to be part of a wider university-funded research project initiated in 1995 and aimed at filling an increasingly evident gap in gender analysis in rural areas in Eastern Europe and/or the Former Soviet Union. By 1995, it was clear that privatisation in the agricultural sector was presenting enormous problems, political, cultural and social. Whilst international organisations were intervening more and more, they tended to address the problem at local government, institutional or macro-economic level. One of the obstacles to further action by development agencies was the lack of locally-based knowledge and research. A key premise of the project was that, although the demand for technical and farming expertise could be met without it, an effective attempt to intervene on the economic and social levels required such deep local knowledge. The aim of the project was therefore to start constructing this pool of resources and analytical tools as a basis for policies on the restructuring of economic and social relations and, in particular, for targeted policies on women.

With regard to gender relations and women in particular, initial research suggested that a pre-existing imbalance based on women's lower skills and lesser agricultural and technological know-how, coupled with a very traditional and patriarchal culture and the break-down in welfare systems and social safety nets would result in women being the most fragile link in the process of economic reform. In response, according to the original project proposal, 'by investigating issues such as gender divisions of labour in household and farming, access to social services and healthcare and participation in different forms of local civil society, there should emerge a map of inequalities, deficiencies and systemic cultural barriers and also a theoretical framework for development and training stemming from knowledge of local and specific gender issues'.

My own doctoral research was to fit within this framework and was to be based on qualitative social and gender analysis at grass-roots level, conducted either in one single country or in a comparative perspective, examining several East European countries or Former Soviet Republics.

My interest in the issue of gender and rural development in post-socialist countries and the specific choice of Kazakstan as a possible research site stemmed from a combination of academic and personal interests and happenstance.

In the course of reading for my undergraduate and master's degrees, I had developed an interest in gender issues and feminist theory, first in the context of literary theory and later in the wider context of the position of women under socialism. My Master's dissertation had focused on the participation of women in the *perestroika* policy initiated in the USSR in the 1980s, specifically its gendered consequences in terms of limitations of women's citizenship and participation in public life and the opportunities *glasnost* was giving women to organise and define their own agendas 'from below'.

In more personal terms, the experience of living and studying in the USSR for a year in the mid-1980s, as part of my undergraduate degree, was pivotal in stimulating my interest in life – and particularly women's lives - under socialism. Many evenings were spent in the student hostel discussing, or more usually arguing heatedly, over the 'proper' roles of men and women, and what had struck me most forcibly then were the contradictions between official ideology on equality of the sexes and people's perceptions of gender roles. In addition, Voronezh University had a broad student body, drawn from all over the Soviet Union and the possibility to talk with students from outside Russia itself, as well as several trips to the Caucasus, also roused my interest in the very different life modes in what I at first assumed to be a 'monolithic' state.

However, two experiences had been missing during this year. First, despite several attempts, the authorities were unwilling to let us, as Western students, move beyond the 9km visa limit which confined us to the city. Our sole experience of the Russian countryside was therefore a tightly controlled day trip to a 'model' collective farm in the Voronezh region and a brief unauthorised visit to another, rather more run-down village, just outside the city. Second, we had also been unable to get the necessary visas to travel to Central Asia, which therefore stayed in my mind as a forbidden, but exotic destination. My interest in this particular region

was subsequently heightened by work and travel elsewhere in Asia and particularly a month spent working in Mongolia in 1993, interviewing nomadic herders for a preventive health project. What was particularly fascinating to me about this visit, was the resistance of the traditional Mongolian way of life, based on transhumant pastoralism, to Soviet-style modernisation.

So, when I discovered that the university was building links with a counterpart in Kazakstan and that funding would be available to make a pilot visit, I jumped at the chance. One of the most striking discoveries to emerge from this initial ten day visit to the then capital, Almaty, in 1996, was the sheer number and variety of international and donor organisations active in the country, ranging from 'major players' such as UN bodies, the World Bank, USAID and EU TACIS, to smaller non-profit organisations and consultancies, often implementing programmes on behalf of the former. I was interested in discovering what their role was in the planning and implementation of change in rural areas and how they were incorporating gender issues into their programmes. What I initially hoped to find were specific projects, incorporating Women in Development or Gender and Development concerns, that would enable me to explore the interface between Western development agencies and local actors from a gender perspective: what strategies had been adopted and how did they mesh with local perceptions of gender relations and change? I thought the focus of my research might be a kind of anthropology of development, which would try to assess how WID/GAD models used elsewhere were being applied in the former Soviet Union and how they contrasted with the Soviet development model applied in Central Asia, which had made the emancipation of women a central concern.

However, it soon became apparent that I was not going to find exactly what I was looking for. Not only were comparatively few organisations working in rural areas, social issues, let alone gender issues were not seen as within the remit for action. This was initially very disappointing - but it did set me thinking about the ways in which rural change was being framed at the top and what the gender implications of this framing might be. If such projects did not exist, why was this the case?

It was also during this visit that I first met a woman who was to have a considerable influence on the shaping of my research. Had I met the 'sugar beet lady?', one of the EU TACIS project managers asked me. Intrigued, I said no, but I would be very interested in meeting her. Who was she exactly? He explained that she was a private farmer in one of the former state farms receiving TACIS project support. There were a number of women private farmers in this community, he said, but she was the most important, and indeed one of the very first people to have set up a farm at all. From what I gathered, she was an extremely forceful personality, a community leader, who also headed a local farmers' association, a machinery station and a credit group. By a fortunate coincidence, she was to attend a TACIS project seminar in Almaty the following day. I didn't hesitate. In contradiction to what I had been hearing about the lack of women in private farming, here, it seemed, was a powerful woman, managing a private farm in a community where other women had also become

private farmers. The following day, I introduced myself to Dina[1] in a break between sessions. After talking for a while about women's traditional involvement in sugar beet production in the Almaty region and about how she and other women in their community had come to set up private farms, she invited me to come and visit. For some reason, a number of foreign women had been interested in interviewing her, she said, and some had even come to live on her farm for a while. She herself had a higher scientific degree from Moscow. She was interested in my research and would be willing to help me.

After this meeting, I did some more research into the former state farm (*sovkhoz*) where she lived. It seemed that former *sovkhoz* Druzhba had been one of the first farms in the Almatinskii district (*rayon*) to opt for 'radical restructuring'. Privatisation had already advanced through several stages. The first wave of private farmers had appeared in 1989 when it became possible to lease land. In 1991, new legislation on land reform had enabled them to register their farms as private enterprises. Restructuring of the state farm itself had begun in 1994, when the *sovkhoz* had been split into 'cooperatives' based on the former sections (*otdeleniye*). By 1996 all but one of these cooperatives had been further restructured into several hundred independent private farms. The state farm itself had employed 1,110 people, divided between a central village and four nearby *otdeleniye,* but was part of a much larger rural settlement of 14,000 people, based around a railway depot, 50 km North of the former capital, Almaty. The railway and the local animal feed plant had provided alternative employment. The community had good transport connections to the city as well as to the *rayon* centre, and a number of people had also commuted there to work. In terms of farming system, the *sovkhoz* was situated in the fertile belt of land near the Zailiskiy Alatau mountains, which provided considerable opportunities for irrigation. With the exception of a few areas of pasture, mainly in the mountains, all the land had been cultivated and the state farm had a mixed profile, including dairy farming, horticulture and wheat and sugar beet cultivation. In 1991, 600 of the farm's 1,100 employees were women, but they were not evenly distributed across the workforce. Some branches, particularly horticulture and dairy work, were dominated by women, whereas cereal cultivation was dominated by men. There were a number of women team leaders, particularly in sugar beet production, but no women brigade leaders and the farm's senior management and specialists were all men. In terms of ethnic composition, the community was very mixed, with the central village formerly dominated by Russians and Germans and the *otdeleniye* by Kazaks, Turks and Uighurs. The community had now been targeted for technical assistance and aid by a number of Western organisations, including EU TACIS and the smaller US organisation, Mercy Corps. The two had been working in tandem to set up credit lines for private farmers and to foster farmers' associations.

This was therefore a fateful meeting. Here was a community in which women were seemingly becoming private farmers, a phenomenon which flew in the face of the widespread attitude amongst Western and urban Kazak experts that I would find no women private farmers in Kazakstan. It was also a community that had been integrated into the Soviet development programme and seemed to be integrated into the current one also.

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[1] All the personal names used in this thesis and some place names have been changed to protect the privacy of respondents.

Given the lack of specific gender and development projects in rural Kazakstan, I reasoned that the best approach would be to focus my research on the gender aspects of the government programme of state and collective farm privatisation and land reform. From what I had learned, the farm restructuring process had followed a range of different models in different regions and communities. In addition, Western development agencies were implementing projects in some rural areas. An interesting approach might therefore be to contrast two rural communities with different profiles in terms of privatisation strategy and Western involvement. What impact were different models of farm privatisation having on women's entitlement and property rights? What were women's roles in the new private farms and were Western rural development initiatives facilitating women's entrepreneurship? I had one possible fieldwork site. I needed another one.

Finding it was the primary objective of my next fieldwork visit, from October to December that same year and it proved to be a more difficult task than I expected. For several fruitless weeks I tried to counter the partner university's unexpected reluctance to make good on its offer to get me to the countryside. It was too cold already, the rector solicitously informed me. There were power cuts, no electricity, no gas, no telephones and no running water. The university was responsible for me and couldn't possibly let me go. It was much too risky. I should come back in the Spring. Mystified and frustrated, I began to put out feelers in other directions, and, in the meantime, focused on conducting in-depth interviews with the international development community and local NGOs, and accompanying Western experts on short visits to former collectives and state farms in the vicinity, including Dina's.

Finally, it was through social networking that I found a possible second fieldwork site. The husband of a Turkish anthropologist working on gender issues had an employee, a German woman teaching in Karaganda, who had married a Kazak – *he* came from the countryside and had relatives in an isolated rural area North of the city. Perhaps they could help me. And so it was that I arrived in Karaganda and was passed along the network of Bogembai's relatives, first to a sister in a small country town, then to the eldest brother who had 'connections' with the local state farm directors and finally, as a result of his negotiations, to an actual *sovkhoz*, selected, he said, because it was 'the most isolated, the most traditional and Kazak state farm in the area' and would therefore be the most interesting for me to study. There were Russians and Germans living in the central village, but the outlying villages were entirely Kazak. At 8am, on a cold November morning, I found myself on former *sovkhoz* Lenin, waiting in an antechamber, with a crowd of mostly elderly women, for an audience with the farm director. Very soon I had been billeted on a Kazak woman of about my age, the head accountant, who often hosted visitors to the farm, 'adopted' by the *kollektiv* of women working in the administration building and whisked off on a tour of the state farm, including the outlying villages.

Here, indeed, was a community with a very different profile. The central village itself was 50km from the nearest town, much of this on untarmacked single-track road across the steppe, which seemed to stretch, endless and empty, into the far distance, broken only by the occasional line of small hills. The *sovkhoz* had four outlying villages, the nearest five kilometres from the centre and the furthest 20 km away across the steppe. As we bumped

along in a dilapidated *sovkhoz* lorry towards one of these, the head agronomist explained that these outlying villages were where much of the agricultural work took place, but that there were also even more distant summer and winter herding encampments where some of the stock was pastured. The state farm had once concentrated entirely on such semi-transhumant, extensive livestock farming, but had diversified over the past ten years or so and now specialised in more intensive fattening of cattle brought in from neighbouring farms and some wheat production. However, the farm's economic situation was now extremely poor. The price of beef had dropped, the supply of cattle for fattening had practically dried up as the other local farms got into difficulties and started to their use stock for barter and in-kind wages. They had decided to focus on wheat production, but the prospects were uncertain. Money wages had not been paid for several years. There were rumours that the power supply was to be cut off for the winter since the farm had been unable to pay its debts to the electricity company. As for the government farm privatisation and restructuring programme, this did not seem to be a burning issue. The *sovkhoz* had become a 'joint stock company', so for the moment they were still together. Nobody had yet taken the option to take land and assets and start farming independently. There had certainly been no interventions from Western or international development agencies on this farm.

The next few days provided an intensive introduction to the *sovkhoz*. What particularly struck me was the vibrancy of community life, not just in the farm office, which always seemed to be a hub of activity, but also in terms of feasts and gatherings in people's homes. On the one hand as I was a guest, some feasts were held 'in my honour' but in addition, the excuse of showing me the farm enabled my host and other farm specialists to visit kin in the outlying villages and I also attended some occasions as a temporary member of my host's household. I was dimly aware that my own research agenda was being swallowed up in complicated strategies I didn't understand. Had my hosts brought together a group of women on the second *otdeleniye* so that I could talk to them about their lives, so that the women could be given the latest information about pension arrears or so that Mainur could have lunch with her second cousin and talk about the cow the latter was raising for her? Much of this was way above my head, but I also intuited that it was a key part of the way in which 'public' life on the *sovkhoz* was articulated with kin and other solidarities. In itself, the way I had gained access to the community suggested the strength and importance of social networks, in this case between kin in the city, town and countryside. In addition, not only did the community seem to accept my presence and even welcome the opportunity to tell their story, I had begun to form a real friendship with my host. At the end of this visit, she invited me to come back and stay with her the following year, for as long as I wanted.

I still had some reservations about both communities. In particular, my objective had been to find two state or collective farms which had adopted contrasting approaches to privatisation and where I would be able to spend a number of months studying the process at close hand. Yet, the second community seemed to be privatising in name only, and there therefore seemed to be no redistribution process and no private farms to investigate at all. Moreover, both here, and in the other community, where farm restructuring seemed to be actually going ahead, even the new private farmers seemed distinctly uninterested in talking about the privatisation process itself. For most people, privatisation, in the sense of the government programme of restructuring, was not an issue. Nobody, even the farm officials responsible

for implementing it, seemed to have a clear grasp of the process or the options available and their implications. Instead, people were interpreting their experience in terms of *bardak*[2] (collapse and chaos) and of *vyzhivanie* (survival), both of the community and of the individual household, and the topics of concern were how and especially from whom, the inputs necessary to household subsistence were to be obtained. After several weeks, I could talk fairly knowledgeably about the relative merits of keeping pigs or cows in the domestic smallholding, about the types of tomatoes best for pickling, and who could provide coal or fodder for the Winter, but this seemed a long way from the kind of information I originally hoped to obtain. Did this mean that these were unsuitable fieldwork communities or was there a problem with the framing of my research question itself ?

On reflection, I realised that what had seemed like a frustrating obstacle was actually an important research topic in its own right. On the one hand, the literature on farm restructuring and my impressions from farm visits and interviews suggested that the privatisation policy was not in fact leading to the expected results. In actual fact, its implementation was being mediated by power relations on the ground and the process could often be described in terms of resistance rather than inclusion and empowerment. On the other hand, the farm privatisation process itself seemed to be embedded in wider processes of change, which were of more immediate concern to people at the grassroots in rural communities. In particular, there seemed to be a radical change in the nature of the relationship between the household and the *sovkhoz*, marked by decreasing outside support (for example, in terms of regular salary and provision of public services) and a corresponding increasing reliance for survival on the domestic economy, family, kin and neighbourhood ties. Farm privatisation therefore needed to be addressed in a much broader sense, not just as a government-sponsored and donor-assisted programme of farm restructuring and agrarian reform but also in terms of a shift in the boundaries between the public and domestic spheres. Given men and women's different loci in these two domains, this was also likely to be a gendered process.

This reconceptualisation of the research question opened up new avenues for exploration. Framing the issues in terms of the relationship between public and private domains would provide a means to investigate the shifting boundaries between the household, the state and the emerging new 'private' sphere of the market, both in ideology and policy and in people's daily lives. In addition, since perceptions of gender roles were also closely bound up with conceptualisations of public and private domains, an exploration of the boundaries between them would permit an analysis of the ways gender relations were changing or shaping change.

During the following year, I spent nine months in Kazakstan, divided between fieldwork in these two rural communities and data collection in Almaty, with two weeks investigating the framing of development and private farms in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. The following year I conducted a further four months fieldwork in Kazakstan, including a short fieldwork expedition to four sheep-breeding farms in the Zhana-Arkinskii and Ulu-tauskii *rayon*s south

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[2] *Bardak* is the subject of Nazpary's recent study '*Post-Soviet Chaos: Violence and Dispossession in Kazakhstan*. Pluto Press, 2001.

of Karaganda. Two days were spent in each community, followed by two weeks further research on one of the four farms, Sarybulak. Although I spent considerably less time here than in my main research communities, the greater mobility which came from being part of a motorised team enabled me to cover a far wider area and also to visit the outlying parts of the farming communities, including the herders out on the *zhaylau* (summer pasture). This research therefore gained in breadth what it lost in depth and, coming as it did when I was already familiar with other examples of farm privatisation, it helped to crystallise a number of ideas on how different farming systems and models of restructuring had affected the gender outcome of reform.

Methodological considerations

The aim of the research was therefore to explore how the new ideologies and practices of rural development determined at macro level were impacting on gender relations in rural communities and households. Although I did investigate the framing of macro-level policy on development and agrarian reform, the main focus was not on the nitty-gritty of the policy-making process itself, nor the ways in which the various actors at this level managed their relationships and conflicts over the goals and meanings of development. Similarly, although I investigated the re-allocation of land and assets during de-collectivisation, the production of statistics on the holdings of men and women or particular types of farms was not the primary goal of the research.

In fact, one of the outcomes of my research was to reveal the complexity of quantitative or statistical analysis in current conditions. In 1991, a specific body was given the task of formulating and managing land reform. This agency, the State Committee for Land Relations and Land Management (Goskomzem) has its headquarters in Almaty and regional and district offices throughout the country. These offices were one of the principle sites of my data collection. The cadastre officials, who made visits to all former state farms to inventory land and mark out individual plots, were a good source of information on the situation in different communities, particularly on the initial farm privatisation process and subsequent changes in the numbers and structures of agricultural enterprises. They generally had maps illustrating the various stages of this process, as well as lists of the individuals granted land shares and the size of their shares. These proved very useful in conducting gender analysis. Moreover, as outsiders, these officials were often more willing to comment than villagers themselves on any conflicts surrounding privatisation. The registry also held records on all *krestyanskie khozyaistva* (private 'peasant' farms), which often included the names of all those who had contributed shares to the enterprise or who were officially listed as members. As an important site for farmers wishing to officially register their land, it was also a good vantage point for participant observation and for making contacts with local farmers.

However, official records on the number of rural enterprises of different types excluded a number of locally salient factors. For example, figures on the number of private farms were generally based on the number of official land certificates (*Gosudarsvennyi Akt na Zemlyu*) which had been issued. However, it soon became apparent that many farmers had never gone through the expensive process of obtaining a certificate. Others had acquired one, then sold or leased the land to another, generally wealthier farmer, for whom they then worked.

Particularly in communities such as Druzhba, which had undergone radical restructuring, figures on the number of private farms, associations and cooperatives fluctuated considerably, reflecting conflicting processes of amalgamation and disintegration. The archival records could give only an indicative picture of the kinds of processes by which land and assets were changing hands and farms being created, merged or split. It is these processes, which were closely intertwined with kinship and other social relations, which are examined most closely in the discussion on farm restructuring[3].

Moreover, as anthropologist Judith Okely puts it, 'numerical material may give a clue to systematic patterns, but people's beliefs, values and actions are not necessarily revealed by (...) counting; instead these crucial revelations are much more likely to emerge from chance incidents, extended comments and both informal and ceremonial gatherings' (1994: 25). Accordingly, I chose to use qualitative research methodologies, which imply 'a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone" and have the aim of 'understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it' (Sherman and Webb, 1988[4], cited Ely et al 1991: 5).

During the first two short visits to Kazakstan, I experimented with various field methods, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Having received some basic training, I also considered using participatory rural appraisal as a means of involving people in the communities more actively in my research. However, the combination of working alone and the increasing pressures and erosion of trust experienced by villagers made the latter two options impractical. Ultimately, I found that participant observation and semi-structured interviews were the methods best adapted to the situation.

The actual strategies and practicalities of selecting and making contact with informants were determined by the topography of the different communities and my own position within them. On the one hand, I sought key informants, such as the farm director, senior management and local officials most involved in implementing farm privatisation, the staff of village councils, local schools and hospitals, court officials and managers of local markets, who were knowledgeable about specific subjects and local patterns. Often I found that my identity as a relatively 'unimportant' young, female researcher was an advantage in persuading officials to share sensitive information about the conflictual redistribution process. On the other hand, on the Lenin and Druzhba state farms, I lived for extended periods of time with host families and both they and their networks of kin, neighbours and work colleagues provided immediate 'core clusters' of individuals and households that I could approach. My position as a 'surrogate family member' gave me an important kind of social and networking capital that was important in building relationships of trust and these initial core clusters snowballed outwards to others in widening circles. On Lenin, for example, membership of my host family opened connections to relatives of different ages, generations, occupations and ethnicities, as well as to their neighbours and colleagues. Household membership also opened access to other settings, including work collectives and

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[3] For parallel discussions on problems with statistical data and techniques for collecting it in rural Central Asia see, for example, Werner (1997a) and Kandiyoti (1999).

[4] *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*. London: Falmer Press, p. 7.

ceremonial occasions. Working in this way heightened my understanding of the importance of social networks in people's daily lives.

However, balancing rapport with the initial core clusters with meeting new families or individuals was a concern in both communities. This was particularly so on Druzhba, where I lived with one of the most powerful private farmers, who aroused particularly strong and often negative emotions in the community. As fieldwork progressed, my association with her household raised a number of ethical and practical problems. I found that I myself had ambivalent feelings about Dina's position in the community and that I felt caught between my personal sympathy for her and my growing knowledge of her position in conflicts over land and assets. Moving between conversations about her life, as she played with her grandchildren or helped prepare for a feast, and conversations with families who felt she had unfairly 'grabbed' assets that belonged to them, or employees she housed in appalling conditions, felt like crossing, uncomfortably, between hostile zones. In addition, I realised that, unlike with male 'winners' from the privatisation process, I had hopes or even expectations of her not only being an entrepreneur, but also a 'politically correct' one, who would show extra consideration for the social implications of rural privatisation. As well as highlighting some of my own expectations around gender roles, these feelings shed light on the complex interactions between gender and inequality. From this perspective, my close association with her household risked distancing me from other groups – particularly those who felt that they had been disadvantaged by privatisation – and I found that it was important to move outside her circle to get a better understanding of the community. That I was able to do so was due to its size and diversity and particularly the existence of public settings, such as the local shops and market, the nearby land office and the donor project, which made it possible to meet other informants relatively easily. By 1998, I appeared to have developed my own separate identity in the village, as people I didn't know would often approach me to ask if I would like to interview them or even for information about privatisation. The research process on Druzhba was therefore one of moving outwards from the small circle provided by an initial, powerful, gatekeeper, whilst maintaining links with original informants.

Conversely, the research process on Lenin began with a relatively wide circle and focused inwards, as relationships with people I knew became closer and it became increasingly difficult to make contact with others. After my first visit, my most substantial research did not involve trying to approach new people for interviews, but participant observation with my Kazak 'relatives' or associated households I already knew[5]. The collapse of the *sovkhoz* public sphere and the growing sense of mistrust in the community as a whole also had an impact on people's perceptions of me and my research. As I have described, during my first visit, people were keen to tell their stories, sometimes because they saw my work as a kind of journalism, which might lead to action from the authorities. By my last visit, when there was no longer any hope in redress from above, people I didn't yet know wondered if I was perhaps a Western spy or a potential buyer of the *sovkhoz*. This casting of me as western

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[5] See also Werner, (1997a), who encountered similar difficulties in approaching 'strangers' for interviews in a rural community in southern Kazakstan and focused her research primarily on twelve kin-related households.

exploiter or rescuer raised uncomfortable issues about my own part in the meeting of East and West. In addition, in the context of the radical upheaval in people's lives, questions about the balance between taking and giving were especially acute. Leaving aside the question of the academic contribution of the research, what contribution could it possibly make to people's lives that would be a fair return for the time, energy and support I was given? As a full participant, my skills in milking cows, making *manty* (ravioli), plucking chickens or lighting the stove remained basic, at best. Adopted as a 'sister' or 'one of us' (*nasha*), I was not only a researcher but part of a social network based on reciprocal exchange, with moral obligations to play a role in it. Living in a community experiencing growing poverty and hardship, I was a potential advocate without financial or other back-up from an organisation that could provide any direct help. Difficulties in negotiating these boundaries are certainly an integral part of anthropological fieldwork in many settings, but I found them to be particularly important in these post-socialist communities undergoing rapid change and encountering an outsider from the west, sometimes for the first time[6]. These questions about the unequal power relations remained a problem throughout and beyond the fieldwork period.

A consolation was sometimes to feel that my own personal and research difficulties around trust, relationship and inequality mirrored the problems being encountered by the people around me, and that this brought us together in the search to map and find a more secure footing in a reality that often felt like shifting sands. Everyday conversations and informal interviews gave my informants a space to discuss issues that affected them in their daily lives. Often, it seemed that having a space to share and reflect on what was happening was rare and important. At their most fruitful, these conversations felt like part of an ongoing learning process, as my questions met and were informed by, those of my informants, who were able to voice their own concerns. As they continued, I collected information on a broad range of subjects, including the process of privatisation and attitudes to it, previous and current occupations of family members, feelings about work for the state farm, private enterprises and/or unemployment, the division of labour in the home and feelings about work for the home and family, economic and emotional coping strategies, changing relationships with kin and colleagues, marriage, sex and childbirth.

From the perspective of the inclusiveness or representativeness of the data I collected, there is no doubt that my identity as a young, female, mainly Russian-speaking researcher, affected the rapport I established with different people, the kinds of conversations I had and the kinds of data I collected. As a feminist researcher, I was particularly interested in giving a voice to women, who had not (yet?) been heard by development agencies. In addition, as a woman, I found it easier to be included in women's activities and to reach a level of trust with women where personal stories and feelings could be expressed. Rapport with male informants was more difficult to establish. Although men and women were not segregated, it was clear that there were strong local ideas about their social behaviour and the boundaries between them. On Lenin, living with the head accountant, a single Kazak woman very

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[6] The particular issues and problems connected with doing anthropological research in postsocialist societies have been addressed recently in De Soto, H. and Dudwick, N. (eds.) (2000) *Fieldwork Dilemmas: Anthropologists in Postsocialist States.*

conscious of needing to protect her reputation, I also identified with her concerns. On Druzhba, Dina's relatively powerful status gave both her – and myself – more freedom from these restrictions. I also found that being part of a mixed-gender team during the expedition opened spaces to talk with men that were not so easily available when I was working on my own. On the other hand, men tended to prefer to talk in sweeping terms about political history rather than their own family or personal stories. Although I did explicitly set out to look at 'gender' rather than 'women', this combination of factors created a gender bias in the data, with most of the detailed 'life histories' in particular, coming from women. I also found that the older generation of Kazak women were often unwilling to talk about the past. Pahl and Thompson (1994) have suggested that specific methodological problems are connected with the 'danger' of remembering in Soviet society. From this perspective, it was interesting that amongst the older generation, Slav respondents in general were far happier to talk about the past than their Kazak counterparts, for whom the years of collectivisation and famine had been and remained taboo subjects even within their own families. Another issue was certainly language, as the older generation of Kazaks, women in particular, were less comfortable speaking in Russian. More widely, in-depth knowledge of Kazak might well have shed further light on the nuances of relationship between Kazak and Russian categories and ways of seeing and describing the world.

From the point of view of balancing breadth and depth, another issue concerns the decision to work in several communities, rather than focusing on a single state farm. A more orthodox practice in anthropological fieldwork, particularly for 'novice' researchers, is to focus on understanding one setting in a very detailed way. Both during and after the actual fieldwork, as the material amassed and points of divergence and similarity spaghettied into increasingly complex patterns, I often wondered whether I had made a wise decision. However, research such as Pine's (1994, 1995) in two areas of rural Poland and Shankland's (1993) on Alevi and Sunni villages in Anatolia, highlighted the potential benefits of using comparative settings to investigate the relationship between culture and economic change.

The result of my fieldwork was therefore to catch a series of points in a process of rapid, profound and ongoing transformation in several rural communities in Kazakstan and to set this analysis in the macro-level context of how rural development was being framed.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured around 8 chapters:

Chapter 1 lays out the main theoretical approach for the study, looking at how existing approaches to 'development' and 'transition,' and particularly theories of public and private domains, obscure or shed light on the gender issues it addresses. It poses a bundle of questions pertaining to gender, the relationship between macro and micro levels, new regimes of inclusion and exclusion and the way ideologies shape socio-economic relations in different political economies.

Chapter 2 places the current reform in the perspective of the past, looking at the accommodation between the indigenous Kazak economy and the ideology and practice of

Soviet development and specifically, how the Soviet model sought to change gender relations and how local communities variously resisted, subverted or adapted to the changes imposed by the state. Drawing on ethnographic studies and life history material from my fieldwork communities, it explores how theories of public and private domains can be applied to indigenous and socialist society and investigates the extent to which gender domains were stable categories and the extent to which they were destabilised by the new political and economic regime. I argue that Soviet development practice led to an accommodation between indigenous and socialist metaphors for gender domains, which varied both between and within the different communities.

Chapter 3 turns to the current macro-level framing of development policy, exploring how (if at all) it is taking account of gender. The first, general, section looks at the different representations and ideologies of gender being expressed and transmitted in the process of state and nation building. The second, more detailed, section looks at the various actors, ideologies and aims driving (economic) development policies and introduces my argument about the 'invisibility' of gender in the current framing of development.

Chapter 4 looks more specifically at how the macro level development model was being translated into rural development policy, programmes and projects in Kazakstan. I argue that the invisibility of gender in the overarching development model was carried through into these policies, with the result that the gendered aspects of agrarian reform were not taken into account. Drawing on research on gender and agrarian reform elsewhere, the chapter then lays out the issues addressed in the case studies of rural reform, which form the backbone of the following three chapters.

Chapter 5 takes a narrow definition of privatisation as the policy of redistribution of the land and assets of state farms. Using material from my fieldwork communities, it explores the significance of gender in this process, looking at: 1) the extent to which existing gender disparities within communities affected the shaping and outcome of redistribution and enterprise formation; 2) the extent to which the privatisation reform itself was producing new gender disparities and 3) how the different examples of redistribution and reorganisation compared in this regard. I argue that the outcome of reform was to create or consolidate divergences in land and property ownership within communities by creating categories of large and small landowners and landless people. Although both women and men were eligible to obtain individual title to land and assets, gender entered into processes of cumulative advantage and disadvantage and the extent to which women were able to concretise their shares was influenced by their position in the socialist-era gender division of labour and power, their position in local farming systems and local models of gender roles and the associated division of labour and authority.

Chapter 6, argues that the 'narrow' privatisation framework was not sufficient to encompass or explain the changes taking place in people's lives and communities. In particular, this model failed to capture the specific ways in which the introduction of the market was intertwined with public (state) and private (domestic) spheres. The first section draws on a detailed ethnographic study of one private farm to illustrate how the macro-level model of entrepreurship obscured the way enterprises actually operated and made women's

contribution to their establishment and survival invisible. Setting the new private enterprises in the context of the wider community, the second section argues that reform was primarily being experienced by rural households in terms of exclusion from the new market domain, the collapse of the public domain and increased reliance on household production, informal trade and complicated kin and social networks of exchange. Referring back to the material presented in Chapter 2, I argue that this shift was creating new patterns of inequality and that the strategies in the state farm communities were influenced by their previous attitudes to and patterns of reliance on the state, informal and domestic economies.

Using a focus on changing forms and meanings of labour and social networks, Chapter 7 looks more specifically at the gender dimensions of the shifting relationship between public (state, market) and domestic domains. By exploring the interface and interaction between the new development ideology described in Chapter 3 and local ideologies of gender, it considers how the reconfiguration of public and private spheres was restructuring gender roles and conversely how local gender ideologies and metaphors were shaping change.

The thesis concludes by evaluating the findings of the field research in connection with its contribution to theory and generating further questions.

CHAPTER ONE

The Objectives and Method in Context

When the USSR collapsed in 1991 Kazakstan emerged geographically as the largest Central Asian republic with an area of some 2,717 thousand square kilometres but a relatively small population of some 16-17 million. Ostensibly it had a GNP per head of some 71% of the average level for the USSR but, as with the other less developed fragments of the former Soviet Union, the transition would not be kind to pretensions of high levels of development. Nevertheless Kazakstan was fortunate to possess one important resource of considerable value in terms of oil. Since the dissolution of the USSR, Kazakstan has implemented a radical shift from the 'Soviet development model' to an identification of development with Western models of capitalism and the market. This planned economic change and systemic transformation is closely bound up with changes in the relationship between public and private domains. Privatisation has been one of the central pillars of the development programme implemented by the Kazakstani government, with the support of international agencies. The reduction of state control and introduction of private ownership has been seen as one of the key ways of producing a more efficient, 'modern' market economy and stimulating growth, as well as providing economic and social benefits to individuals and communities. In the rural sector, this has entailed major structural transformation, with moves to eliminate all collective and state farms by encouraging the formation of new agricultural enterprises based on private ownership of land and assets.

The research on which this thesis is based aimed to explore these processes of planned change in rural areas of Kazakstan from a specifically gendered perspective. It poses two main questions. First, what are the implications of this current framing of rural development at macro level for gender relations at micro level? Second, are current rural development ideologies and policies leading to new regimes or inequality and exclusion, and if so, what is the place of gender?

Why look specifically at gender in this context? Setting my own research in the context of the existing literature, this first chapter explores the reasons why this is an important area for analysis and the extent to which the current literature can elucidate the issues involved as well as defining in more detail the research question I am taking forward and the parameters of my analytical framework.

Gender analysis as a research tool

By drawing a distinction between 'sex' – the anatomical and biological characteristics of female and male bodies - and 'gender' - the culturally specific articulation of these differences, the feminist scholarship of the late 1970s and 1980s created an analytical tool for exploring expressions of sexual difference and inequality between women and men both in different societies and systems and dynamically, over time and through economic and cultural transformation. As Borocz and Verdery (1994: 223) put it :

'the notion of gender, like that of class as conceptualised by Marx, focuses attention on a fundamental social relationship, the relationship between 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Work on gender investigates the place of that relationship in social life, in power and social inequality, in forms of symbolic representation, and in the reproduction of society. The study of gender is not about women : it is about women and men in relation to each other, and it is about one of the most basic organizing principles in human societies, past and present.'

Taking up the idea of gender as a basic organizing principle, the premise of this thesis is that it is vital to analyse gender relations in order to fully understand the process of social and economic transformation in rural Kazakstan, both in terms of systemic change and the way it is experienced and shaped by individuals and communities. It also aims to engage with the debates through which gender analysis has evolved, particularly since the late 1980s, notably around the adequacy of Western models of sexual difference and the gender relations inscribed on them, to explore meanings in other cultures, and around the interrelation between gender and other systems, such as class, generation and ethnicity.

Gender analysis in the context of post-socialist reform in rural Kazakstan

One of the major reasons for conducting research on gender and rural change in a post-socialist context is the lack of fit between the existing literature and the research question, which occupies a blind spot at the conjunction of a number of different disciplines.

On the one hand, research on agricultural sector reform in Kazakstan and other post socialist countries takes a predominantly technical and economic approach, excluding the social and cultural context of transformation. In particular, despite the body of knowledge on the gender impact of capitalist development and agrarian reform in other parts of the world, little consideration, either direct or oblique, has been given to the possible differential impact of decollectivisation on women and men. Neither has attention been paid to the influence of local constructions of gender in shaping responses to reform[7].

On the other hand, since the 1970s, a considerable body of work has been built up on gender and rural development in the Third World, looking at issues such as women's contribution to farming systems and the impact of capitalist expansion, development projects and agrarian reform on women. However, this research cannot simply be transposed to a Kazakstani context. Its relevance to the particular situation in post-socialist countries has not been established and is, indeed, one of the major issues facing development agencies operating in the region.

One particularity of the situation in post-socialist states is that communism itself was a political system explicitly based on ideas of modernisation and development. The current capitalist development project is not starting from scratch, but overlays and must interrelate

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[7] Some notable exceptions are Sue Bridger's (1992, 1997) and Myriam Hivon's (1995a) work on women and agrarian reform in Russia. This literature will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4 in connection with the discussion on the framing of post-Soviet rural development. Gender issues have not been specifically addressed in the technical literature on agricultural sector reform in Kazakstan, although some findings are presented in the UNDP's annual development reports and in a study commissioned by the Asian Deveopment Bank (Bauer et al, 1997).

with existing socialist development categories, that were themselves intertwined in particular ways with the identities and structures of pre-Soviet society. As Olivier Roy (1999: 110) puts it, despite the mistaken perception shared by the IMF and some NGOs, the Kazakh Plains are not the Middle West of the nineteenth century. Far from being a blank slate on which Western development discourses and practices can simply be inscribed, Kazakstani society therefore has a complex existing social fabric, which has already resisted or influenced the outcome of a previous modernisation/development project in particular ways.

What makes the Kazakstani situation particularly interesting from the point of view of gender and development is the uniqueness of its starting point to capitalist transformation. As in the other Central Asian Republics, the transformation of gender relations was a key part of the modernisation policies applied during the Soviet period. From the outset, the Bolshevik regime promoted emancipation of indigenous women, with attacks on practices such as veiling and attempts to bring women into the labour force and political life (Massell, 1974; Tabyshalieva, 1995; Warshofsky Lapidus, 1978). Throughout the Soviet period, accounts of rural development used indicators of women's education levels and employment as evidence of successful modernization and progress (Korbe, 1950; Vasil'eva, 1975). Huge steps were indeed made in these areas (UNDP, 1995). However, critiques of Soviet development point to its uneven success in changing the position of women, evoking the perpetuation or even reinforcement of gender inequality under the Soviet regime, especially in rural areas (Akiner, 1997; Bridger, 1987; Brill Olcott, 1991; Harris, 1996a and b; Lubin, 1984; Poliakov, 1989; Tabyshalieva, 1995; Tett, 1994). The history of Soviet intervention in Kazakstan therefore raises questions about gender and inequality and the ways that local identities and practices may serve as obstacles to engineered change or may shape it in particular ways, that are equally salient in relation to the current development project.

The now considerable literature on the gender aspects of postsocialism provides some responses to these problems. In particular, one of the strengths of this literature is its historical and contextual grounding in analysis of gender relations under socialism. However, there are a number of limitations with this literature in relation to the present research question. Firstly, the 'women and transition' literature has mainly tended to talk about women as an undifferentiated category. As Bruno argues, this 'ignores the complexities of gender stratification' and other factors cutting across it, such as generation, ethnicity, social and economic stratification, the urban-rural divide and geographical location all shift the boundaries of a uniform gender analysis and call for ethnographic grass-root studies of the realities of different groups of women' (1995b: 73-4) Recent work, such as Ashwin's (1999) on women mine-workers' changing attitudes to collectives and Kaneff's (2002) on the attitudes of two generations of rural women to market activity, have demonstrated the fruitfulness of this approach. Secondly, although the literature often refers to gender, its predominant focus is on women, either as victims or agents of change, rather than on gender relations as such. Changing masculinities have, as yet, been given little attention[8]. The

[8] One of the early exceptions to this is Hilary Pilkington's (1992) article, which shows that the civil society and public/private concepts can also be used to investigate the shifts in men's, as well as women's roles and how they are interrelated. The second part of her article, based on fieldwork in urban Russia, explores the renegotiation of both male and female identities in informal youth groups, one of the forms of the newly emerging civil society. More recently, the construction of masculinities

reasons for the tendency to focus on women rather than gender are manifold, including the previous framing of analysis in terms of the 'woman question' i.e. how far socialism had brought about equality for women, and the emphasis in feminist research on empowering women or 'giving women a voice'. Thirdly, there is still a lack of the micro-level studies of change in post-socialist countries, particularly in rural areas, that would situate gender issues against the background of other factors of stratification.

What follows is therefore a cross-disciplinary exploration of the relevant literature, which interweaves debates around the particular post-socialist 'transition' to market economy and democracy in Kazakstan with debates in the literature on development, focusing on inequality, inclusion/exclusion, the feminisation of subsistence and shifting boundaries between the state, individual and household in different political economies.

Examining the 'transitional economy' model of change

One of the ongoing concerns of development theorists is to investigate the links between 'paradigms' in development thought, the practice of the agencies which implement them and the societies they seek to develop (Hewitt, 2000; Kohler, 1995; Thomas, 2000). The 1980s and 1990s were spanned by two such 'paradigms': on the one hand, the neo-liberal paradigm which emerged in the wake of the debt crisis in the 1970s and advocated economic liberalisation and structural adjustment policies as the foundation for development; and on the other hand, the more nuanced New Policy Agenda, which still advocated markets as the most efficient mechanism for economic growth, but also had the broader remit of encouraging democratisation by encouraging good governance, building the capacity of institutions and strengthening 'civil society' (Hewitt, 2000; Kohler, 1995). In addition, the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1994 and the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995 also signalled a growing sensitisation to the gender, social and 'human' aspects of development. These paradigms, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, form the backdrop to the particular development paradigm of 'transition' or 'transitional economy' being applied to Kazakstan and other post-socialist societies, both in academic theory and policy recommendations.

As Burawoy and Verdery (1999: 4-6) describe, diagnoses and policy prescriptions vary across the various models of 'transition' elaborated by economists, historians, political scientists and sociologists. However, all share a number of assumptions about the relationship between systemic transformation, modernisation and increased benefits to the population, and between economic and social change. First, transition is conceptualised as an inevitable, linear process of change from one state (socialism) towards the type of social, economic and political system which has developed in Western Europe and North America (market economy). Second, it is regarded predominantly as a matter of economic growth, attainable through the espousal of Western models of economy and a range of social and cultural changes which can be facilitated through 'outside' help. Third, these macro-level policies are assumed to produce micro-level benefits for the population as a whole, in terms of increased living standards and greater individual opportunity and autonomy. This

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in general, and in post-socialist society in particular, has become an increasingly researched topic. See for example Ashwin, S. and Lytkina, T. (2004)

'transition' paradigm bears striking similarities to the 'modernisation' paradigm of development which emerged during the 1950s[9] and the arguments developed in critiques of this paradigm are also relevant to transition.

The relationship between capitalist modernisation, economic growth and universal benefit

The considerable body of critical literature on development theories, programmes and specific projects built up in the fields of development studies and anthropology since the 1950s, when many former Western colonies gained their independence and 'development' as a theory and practice explicitly entered onto the global scene, suggest that the relationship between capitalist modernisation, economic growth and universal benefit is far from linear. One of the fundamental contributions of this literature, particularly since the 1970s, has been to problematise development by illuminating and critiquing the premises on which it is implicitly based, questioning its success in terms of its own paradigm, and showing how it is embedded in particular global and societal power relations[10]. These critiques provide interesting angles from which to consider the current transition to market economy in Kazakstan and the possible micro-level impacts of the country's inclusion into the global capitalist system.

Relying mainly on structuralist analysis at a macro level, dependency theory argues that the benefits of capitalist integration and economic growth are unevenly spread, and may create new groups of losers as well as winners on both global and national levels. Since capitalism itself is inherently inegalitarian and embedded in political and other power relations, some parts of the world and some social groups are not only not fully incorporated into the development process but are actively underdeveloped by it, whereas others develop at the cost of the former (Frank, 1967). Using a conceptual model of centre and periphery, Wallerstein (1974) extends this model to explore the ways in which this pattern of exploitation is reproduced at sub-national level, suggesting that just as the 'peripheral' economies are exploited by the 'core' economies, rural economies are exploited by metropolitan areas[11].

Investigations by anthropologists and sociologists into the effects of economic change and development projects also problematise the assumption that the rewards of economic growth will eventually be reaped by all, as well as some of the more sweeping aspects of dependency theory itself. They have demonstrated that, even in regions of substantial economic growth, poverty levels often remain the same or deteriorate further (Mosley, 1985: 155; Pearse, 1980). Taking a micro-level perspective, they illustrate that the communities at the receiving end of development are composed of a mixture of people, all with different amounts of power, access to resources and interests, which mediate the effects of transformation (Hill, 1986: 16-19). Critiques of the 'modernisation paradigm' therefore

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[9] Gardner and Lewis (1996: 7) argue that, after the debt crises of the 1980s and subsequent structural adjustment programmes, there was a general re-emphasis in organisations such as the World Bank on important elements of the modernisation paradigm, particularly economic reform and growth.
[10] For a historical review and critique of development paradigms see Webster (1990), Kohler (1995), Gardner and Lewis (1996), Hewitt (2000) and Thomas (2000).
[11] Both Frank and Wallerstein are cited in Gardner and Lewis (1996: 16-17).

suggest that capitalist transformation is likely to be uneven, both at international level and within countries themselves. One of the reasons for this is that the process is inherently political and embedded in power relations, whether at global, national or local levels and these need to be taken into account in any analysis of development.

Turning to the situation in Kazakstan, it might be supposed that although 'transition' may lead to the country's inclusion in the global capitalist economy and create affluence and new opportunities for some, for others, it may bring poverty, marginality and exclusion from modern means of existence. Indeed, the Kazakstani economy is being integrated into global capitalism in specific ways and the agriculture sector is taking on a particular role within the overall economy and significance to the state.

The Central Asian Republics – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - were amongst the least developed in the Soviet Union and the least well known in the West before its break-up. Covering a territory roughly equivalent to that of the European Union, the Republic of Kazakstan is the largest of the five, but its vast arid and semi-arid regions also make it the most sparsely populated. At 6.2 persons per square kilometre, its population density is among the lowest in the world (UNDP, 1995: 10). Kazakstan is also one of the most richly endowed republics in terms of natural resources, and today, as in the Soviet period, this resource wealth has helped to define its development trajectory.

Within the Soviet Union, the Republic of Kazakhstan's enormous natural resources, including confirmed holdings of 2.8 billion tons of oil and 2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, together with immense reserves of coal, iron ore, nonferrous metals and gold, meant that its main orientation was production of raw materials for the wider USSR economy. Although the emphasis was on export, the Soviet period also saw considerable industrial development, boosted by the evacuation of many industries to the region during World War II. The share of the urban population grew rapidly, climbing from 10% in 1913 to 58% in 1989 (UNDP, 1995: 12). At the same time, agriculture was a major contributor to the Republic's economy. On the eve of independence, the sector produced over one-third of the national income in the Republic (34%, as compared to industry's 37%) (Esentugelov, 1996: 198-9). Similarly, the Republic of Kazakhstan was a major exporter of agricultural produce within the Union economy, supplying 27% of Soviet wheat, 23% of wool and 7% of meat (Kaser, 1997). Around 42% of the population lived in rural areas (UNDP, 1995) and agriculture employed nearly a quarter of the labour-force, as compared to 14% in Russia (Esentugelov, 1996: 198; Craumer, 1995: 1)[12]. This combined industrial/agricultural profile distinguished the Republic of Kazakhstan from its more agricultural Central Asian neighbours, such as Uzbekistan, where exports were dominated by cotton, over half the population (59%) lived in rural areas (Kaser, 1997: 23) and agriculture, forestry and fishing accounted for 43.5% of the workforce (Craumer, 1995: 1). It has also been a key factor in shaping the Kazakstani political economy and its integration into the global economy since independence.

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[12] It should be noted that the percentage of the population living in urban and rural areas varied considerably between regions (oblasts): in Karaganda oblast 75% of the population lived in developed urban areas, whereas over half the population lived in rural areas in Southern Kazakstan, Northern Kazakstan and Taldykorgan oblasts (UNDP, 1995: 24).

The international agencies which began operating in Kazakstan after independence saw the country's agricultural sector both in terms of a promise and a challenge for the future. On the one hand, they argued that agriculture could play an important role in the future growth and development of the economy. With abundant and diverse agricultural resources and a well-trained agricultural labour force, agriculture could remain a major supplier of raw materials for domestic use and an important source of export revenues (ADB 1996b; World Bank, 1994). Moreover, a reorientation of agriculture towards more sustainable farming systems could both ensure food self-sufficiency for the country and benefit the environment (World Bank, cited Kaser, 1997). On the other hand, for donor agencies, the challenge was to transform the agricultural sector to a market-based system, which would involve a number of interconnected areas, including land reform and farm restructuring; restructuring of supply, processing, marketing and distribution systems; restructuring of rural financial institutions; and restructuring of public administration in agriculture. Moreover, these reforms would have to be conducted in a situation of economic instability and decline, where old trading relations within the Soviet Union had been disrupted and new ones had yet to be established in global world markets. In addition, there were likely to be tensions between the economic imperatives of market reform of the agricultural sector and the social imperatives of maintaining living standards and social protection for rural populations, as well as political divergences over the goals and methods of the reform process (ADB 1996b; World Bank, 1994).

Between 1991 and the end of my fieldwork in 1998, the challenges facing Kazakstan's agriculture sector were considerably more apparent than the promises. Setting agriculture in the wider context of overall economic development, the immediate post-independence years saw a precipitous fall in production, disruption of the monetary system and a sharp decline in the population's standard of living. Between 1991 and 1993, the national income decreased by 38.2%, dropping back to the level of 1976. The GDP fell by 15% in 1992 and 17.1% in 1993. Virtually all sectors of the economy were in very difficult straits. Simultaneously, the economy suffered from runaway inflation, which reached around 3,000% during the first year of reforms in 1992 and peaked at a monthly rate of 55% in November 1993. Industrial production was badly hit, sinking by 14.8% in 1992 and 16.1% in 1993 (Esentugelov, 1995).

However although all sectors suffered, the costs of transition to market economy fell particularly heavily on agriculture and the rural sector. Output declined to less than half former levels, with grain production falling from 30 million tons in 1992 to 6.5 million in 1998 and cattle stock from 9 million in 1992 to 3.9 million in 1998 (World Bank, 2003: 4). The contribution of the agriculture sector to the total economy also fell from an average of 25% of GDP during 1986-1990 to an estimated 14% in 1995 (ADB, 1996b: 10). Conversely, over 2 million rural households remained dependent upon agriculture for their survival. In fact, during the initial post-independence period, agriculture was the only sector to have recorded slight employment increases, as it absorbed workers displaced from other sectors (World Bank, 1994).

The particularly severe contraction in agriculture can partly be explained in relation to internal factors, including the need to adjust to rapid institutional changes, removal of state

subsidies and particularly adverse weather conditions, and external factors such as the loss of the Soviet market, the regional financial crisis and low international prices (World Bank, 2003). However, the particular model of economic development espoused by the Kazakstani government also had a direct bearing on the position of the agriculture sector, as well as on elite consolidation strategies and land reform and enterprise restructuring policies. With its vast reserves of raw materials for which there were ready world markets, Kazakstan could afford to rely much less on its agricultural sector than other new independent Central Asian states such as Uzbekistan. The government saw the oil, gas and mineral extraction industries as the key sectors that could bring rapid returns, stabilise the state budget and drive economic growth.

Oil, iron and non-ferrous metals accounted for 80 percent of exports, drew the lion's share of foreign investment and were the main drivers of GDP growth (Wurzel, 1998: 20)[13]. Conversely, investment in agriculture and rural development represented only a small proportion of government expenditure. It was not until 1998 that the Kazak authorities began to realise the need to strengthen the process of agricultural development (World Bank, 2003).

The result was to create highly uneven economic structures. On the one hand, the Kazakstani economy was integrated in the global economy primarily as an exporter of raw material[14]. On the other, as Clover and Corzine (1998: 1, cited Nazpary, 2002: 11) describe: 'Economic reforms also created two distinct economies. One is export-oriented, and includes privatised oil companies and metal plants, and the banks that finance them. Flush with cash, they are bus issuing ADRs and corporate Eurobonds. In the other economy wages are paid in vegetable oil, vehicles tyres and loaves of bread, if at all'.

As I investigated my research communities, I found that the relationship between capitalist modernisation, economic growth and universal benefit indeed seemed far from straightforward. In rural areas, rather than bringing growth, the reforms appeared to be causing stagnation or retraction to a subsistence economy, creating or widening inequalities between town and countryside and between various groups within rural communities themselves.

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[13] Cited in Nazpary, 2002, p. 10.

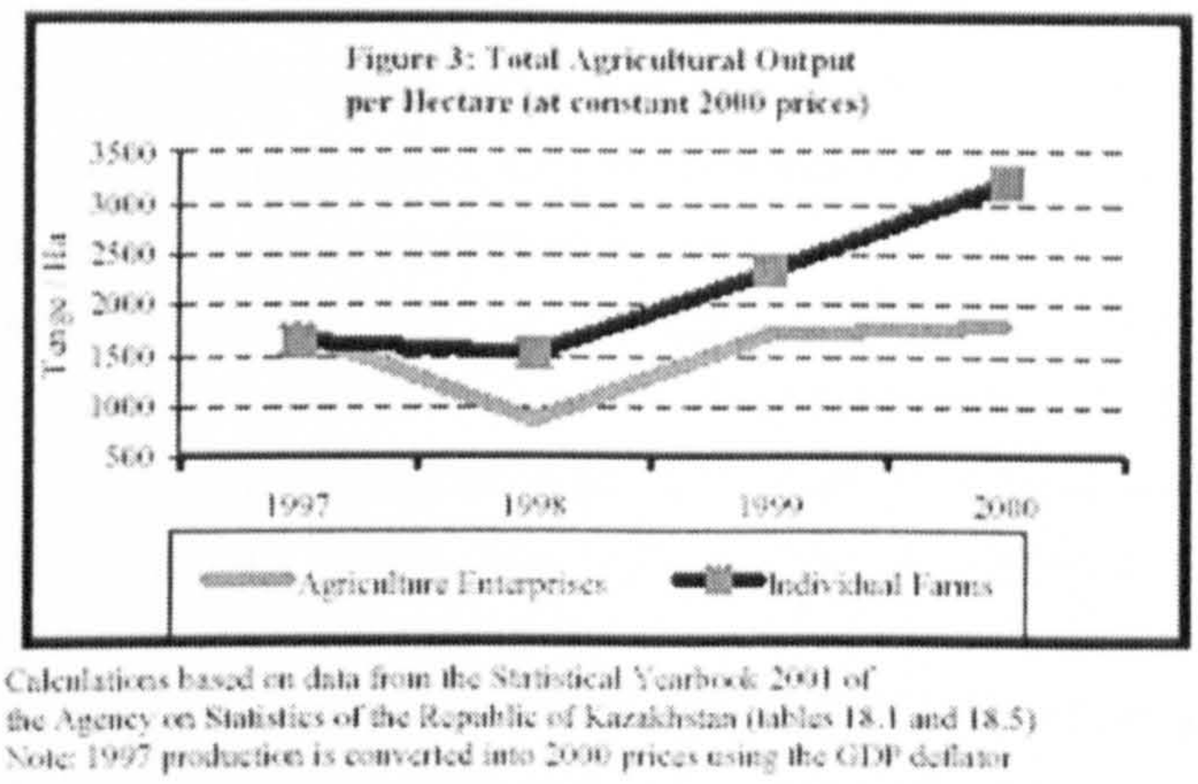
[14] This dependency was attested by the dramatic drop in GDP in 1998 following the fall in raw material prices and the subsequent government budget cuts.

Table 1.1 Key Agricultural Indicators

	1985-1990	1991	1992	1993	1999*
Contribution to Net Material Product (NMP)	35.6	34.2	30.4	31.4	
Growth in Output		- 24.7	0.5	-15.0	
Contribution to Employment	22.8	23.4	24.4	N.A.	21.9

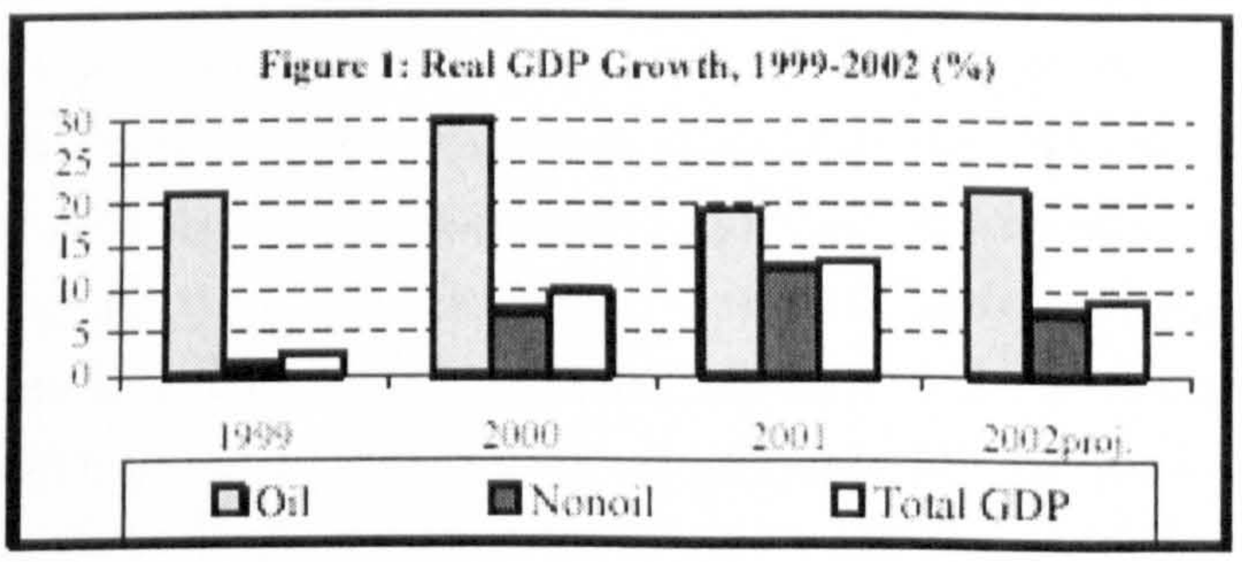
SOURCE: GOSKOMSTAT and World Bank Estimate (World Bank, 1994: 1)
* 1999 figures from IMF

Figure 1.1 Agricultural Output between 1997 and 2000



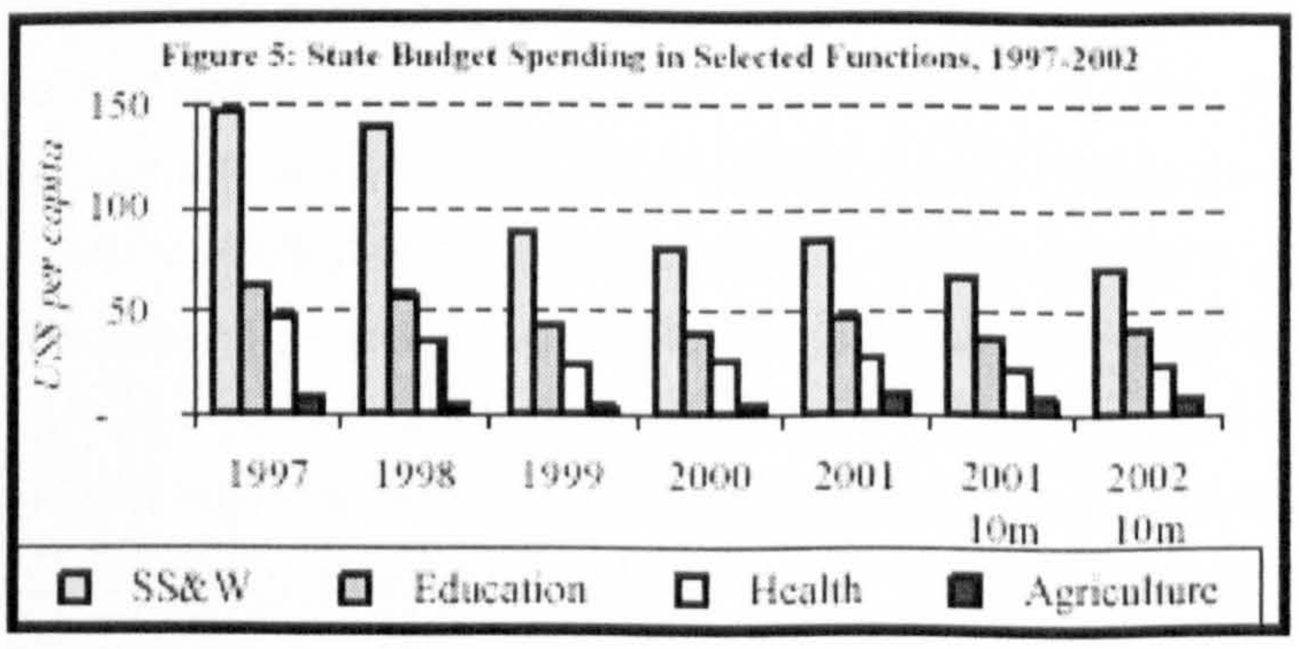
Calculations based on data from the Statistical Yearbook 2001 of
the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan (tables 18.1 and 18.5)
Note: 1997 production is converted into 2000 prices using the GDP deflator

Figure 1.2 Share of Oil and Non-Oil Sectors in GDP Growth



Oil activities in mining, manufacturing, construction and transport.
Source: Agency on Statistics of the RK and WB staff estimates.

Figure 1.3 State Budget Spending on Agriculture



Note: SS&W stands for social security and welfare.
Source: WB staff calculations.

(Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 from the World Bank's Kazakstan Country Report January 2003)

A similar divide ran across the political landscape. In the conditions of what Nazpary (2002) terms 'post-Soviet chaos' or, to use the local expression, *bardak* following the dissolution of the soviet state, a minority elite stratum grasped economic opportunity and formed networks of power within the emerging market economy and post-Soviet polity. These networks are comprised of the 'tiny but very powerful, rival networks of the Kazak elite who formed the higher echelons of the former communist party [and] who have expanded their old power base by converting to the new market orthodoxy and by restructuring the old state apparatus' (Nazpary, ibid: 152). Despite the constitution and elections, this process of restructuring happened through the deals between these networks not through a democratic process (Masanov, 1996) and the new state also has strong authoritarian tendencies (Bremmer and Welt, 1996; Brill Olcott, 1997). What emerged was a 'kleptocratic state', whose administrative and coercive powers were monopolised by members of insider networks for their own interests, where welfare provision or redistribution of wealth was minimal and the majority of the population were 'dispossessed' of their means of security and participation (Nazpary, 2002). In the rural communities where I conducted my field research, this translated into a widespread feeling that, far from giving any sense of democratic participation or empowerment, post-Soviet reform had created conditions of extreme contingency, where wealth and power was held by a minority, corruption was rife, the authorities could not be held accountable and as one local saying had it, 'the most we can hope for is that the same pigs will stay at the trough; at least this lot have had their fill; bring in a new bunch and they will start guzzling all over again'.

The relationship between economic and social change

The critique of orthodox models of development has been an important theme in anthropological literature, from the earlier work of Polanyi (1957) to more recent attacks on the international development industry such as those found in Chambers (1983, 1993) and Hobart (1993), which have focused on the links between economic change and cultural practice and particularly the interaction between development plans and local communities themselves.

The crux of these critiques is that, contrary to the plans of policy makers which cast solutions to economic problems in economic terms alone, the economy is always embedded in a variety of non-economic practices. This approach opens the possibility of exploring the ways in which people at the 'receiving end' of development may accept, resist and in other ways shape change. Whereas modernisation theory presents people predominantly as an 'obstacle' to change and dependency theory as 'victims' of change, recent research points to the importance of looking to micro level in order to understand the dynamics of economic and social transformation. Long, for example, uses the concept of 'human agency', the recognition that people actively engage in shaping their own worlds, rather than their actions being wholly pre-ordained by capital or the intervention of the state (Long and Long, 1992: 33). His case studies show that the organization and activities of local people are not simply responses to externally initiated change, but contribute to and modify the pattern of regional and even national development (Long and Roberts, 1978). Two key questions are: how are people combining new and old ways of doing things in devising strategies to sustain or enhance their livelihoods? And, what do 'ordinary' people think 'development' is and how do

they conceive of their own lifestyle and life-chances in relation to apparent 'development opportunities'? (Webster, 1990: 10).

From this perspective, markets and new private property regimes in rural areas in Kazakstan may also be shaped by the ways in which local people and communities absorb, manipulate or resist the new parameters of action. From this perspective, the normative view of transition, as wielded by economists and Western multilateral agencies, has also been criticised for relying on an under-theorized understanding of changes in society and economy (Anderson and Pine, 1995; Burawoy and Verdery, 1999; Mandel and Humphrey, 2002; Hann, 2002). Transition theory projects 'scientific' regularities irrespective of particular contexts, neglecting histories and geographies and questions of scale (Cartier, 1999: 3). By positing the idea of a natural market as an a priori phenomenon that can be liberated, it obscures the ways in which markets are socially constructed and underpinned by institutions, culture, traditions and relationships between people and processes that stretch across space, especially changing class, gender and ethnic relations. A number of researchers, particularly anthropologists, have pointed to this impoverished understanding of social and cultural relationships and stressed the need to investigate how individuals and communities are shaping the new system and sometimes sending it into uncharted directions (Anderson and Pine, 1995; Hann and Dunn, 1996; Werner 1997a, b; Bridger and Pine, 1998; Humphrey, 1998; Kandiyoti and Mandel, 1998; Burawoy and Verdery, 1999; Roy, 1999, Mandel and Humphrey, 2002; Hann, 2002).

Drawing on these critiques, this thesis explores the link between marketisation and the economic and social benefits this process is assumed to provide to individuals and communities in rural Kazakstan, and to examine the relationship between economic and cultural change, 'the extent to which the market has an intrinsic power to revolutionise culture and social relations and the degree to which individuals are responsible for the (re)production of the cultural meanings and practices which engender the market' (Bruno, 1996b). It does so through the specific lens of gender analysis.

Capitalist transformation and gender

Proponents of the current 'transition and economic growth' model argue that higher levels of income and economic development are associated not only with improvements in measures of well-being, such as education, longevity, rights and opportunities, but also with greater gender equality (World Bank, 2000). On the other hand, opponents suggest that 'there is no automatic link between economic growth and the advancement of women, even in a limited material sense' (Pietila and Vickers, 1990: 40). On the contrary, critiques developed in the context of the structural adjustment policies imposed in the Third World and based on this neo-liberal discourse have show that macro-economic policy objectives and instruments have tended to be gender-biased in their effects and do not take account of gender inequalities at micro and meso levels, which have macroeconomic implications and can impede or distort the outcome of reform (Sen and Grown, 1987; Çagatay, 1998).

One gendered critique of the marketisation and economic growth paradigm relates to the discipline of economics as a whole and the gender blindness of the models it employs.

According to this argument, economics has been the discipline least permeable to feminist analyses and thinking, and this is reflected in the continued use of frameworks and models that fail to take account of women and men's separate loci in economic, social and political life and particularly the gender assymetries that may be aggravated by economic restructuring or systemic change. One indication is that neoclassical economics takes a standard, apparently 'gender neutral' individual as its basic category of analysis. It is assumed that human beings throughout history and across cultures pursue their self interest in a rational manner and that this actor 'homo economicus' can be used to chart a transhistorical and transcultural model of human behaviour. However, as Çagatay (1998: 4) argues, this model lacks the capacity to take account of the way economic behaviour is shaped by social identities such as gender and ethnicity. Conversely, in practice, the individual at the foundation of economic theory is constructed as a male subject and economic models are constructed around androcentric norms. As Chris Beasley (1994) describes, economic models are grounded in a series of 'sexual ecomyths', that is, implicit or explicit principles or assumptions that systematically marginalize or exclude women. These might include ideas such as, 'women do not work', 'women are unproductive' or 'women are absent from or unimportant in the economy'. As a result, these models fail to take account of the actual structure of society, particularly the embeddedness of productive activities (income-generating, generally linked to the market) in reproductive activities (unpaid care and development of people in the domestic sphere). Classical macroeconomic models are therefore not so much gender neutral as gender blind, failing to take account of the different ways in which men and women combine work in the 'formal' economy with 'unproductive' labour in the domestic sphere and particularly women's greater role in reproductive labour, together with gender biases and inequalities in the labour market, access to credit, distribution of wealth and income and decision-making, which restrict and shape the economic activity of women.

The gendered effects of capitalist modernisation have also been explored in the development studies and anthropology literature, which now constitutes a specific and considerable, body of work. It shows that, just as economic change has differential social effects *between* households, it may also have unequal effects *within* households, whose various members have different access to and control over resources and different cultural repertoires of responses and opportunities open to them (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 62; Ostergaard, 1992; Rogers, 1980; Whitehead, 1981). The pioneering work in this area was Boserup's (1970) cross-cultural study *The Role of Women in Economic Development,* which, by investigating changing production relations in connection with the sexual division of labour and marriage and inheritance systems, traced the specific impact of capitalist development on women. A number of the questions it raises are still very much topical. Of particular concern to this thesis is the argument surrounding the 'feminisation of subsistence'. According to this paradigm, as economies have become more technologically developed and integrated into the capitalist system, women have been increasingly withdrawn from production or forced into the subsistence sector, while men have taken centre stage in the production of cash crops. On the one hand, women's reproductive duties (feeding, clothing and caring for their families) and their role in producing the subsistence foods on which their households depend, have made them less free than men to experiment with new technologies and production for exchange. On the other, male labour migration has often left women behind to carry the

burden of supporting the subsistence sector. However, Boserup also argues that these changes have not been automatic, but have been influenced by bias in the framing of development policies and practices. Her critique shows how ethnocentric colonial policies, which assumed that women were not involved in agricultural production, meant that women's actual work in the spheres of subsistence agriculture and domestic labour went largely unrecognised and women farmers were bypassed in favour of men.

Previous gender inequalities and/or 'gender blindness' or patriarchal attitudes on the part of those planning and implementing development programmes, may therefore lead to women being marginalized in the process of capitalist development. The many recent examples of this suggest that this might be a useful framework for the analysis of decollectivisation in rural Kazaktsan[15]. However, for a number of reasons, the relevance of the feminisation of subsistence paradigm cannot be assumed.

First, recent work has cautioned against making a simplistic equation between the introduction of market economy in rural areas and the marginalisation of women, or between men as 'winners' and women as 'losers'. Drawing on a range of anthropological studies, Moore (1998: 79-80) shows how a portrayal of this kind may distort the actual complexity of gender relations and obscure key dimensions of analysis. To adopt the framework of women as 'losers' being pushed back into subsistence agriculture may mean that insufficient attention is given to the ways in which women actively struggle against the situation they find themselves in. In addition, any simple characterisation of women as disadvantaged tends to reinforce the treatment of women as a homogenous category and obscure the ways that class and ethnicity, for example, may heighten inequalities between different groups of women as well as between women and men. Using these dimensions of analysis, other studies have shown how overall effect of the penetration of capitalism into traditional rural production systems has frequently been the impoverishment of the peasant agricultural sector as a whole, rather than a simple gain for men (Deere and Leon de Leal, 1981, cited Moore: 77). Economic change may not exacerbate differences between women and men within the household, but instead increase differentiation between households and therefore between individual women (Stoler, 1977, cited Moore: 82). In some instances, women's roles in alternative, informal income generating activities may put them in a better position than men to seize new opportunities outside subsistence production (ibid).

Second, as noted above, theories elaborated in the context of capitalist transformation of subsistence agriculture are not necessarily transposable to the situation in post-socialist countries, where land reform is a unique, historically novel process of transition from centrally planned to market economy and from one socio-political system to another

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[15] For a specific case study, see for example Dey's work on rice development projects in Gambia. Her account shows that by assuming that men controlled land, labour and income, the projects failed to increase national rice production and increased women's dependency on men. Women's traditional economic rights were systematically undermined – only men were given rights to irrigated land, whereas under the previous Mandinka farming system, both men and women were allocated separate land for cultivation in return for labour for collective household consumption. The projects failed to recognise the central role of female producers. By ignoring the complexities of the farming system and concentrating on male farmers, they not only disadvantaged women, but lost out on their valuable expertise (Dey, 1981, discussed in Gardner and Lewis, 1996 : 65).

(Gleason, 1993). In so far as indigenous subsistence-based farming systems in Kazakstan had already been changed by Soviet development policies, the existence or nature of a 'subsistence' domain cannot be assumed. Further, if it exists – or is being 'reinvented' in relation to the market - neither can its meaning nor the value ascribed to it by local people. This caveat connects with a further set of critiques of the way in which feminist analysis itself has imposed Western categories and assumptions of meaning and value. Whereas an important current in feminist analysis used dichotomies of public/domestic (Rosaldo, 1974), nature/culture (Ortner, 1974; MacCormack and Strathern, 1980) and production/reproduction (Edholm et al, 1977) to explain what was seen as universal subordination of women, more recent research suggests that it is important not to take for granted categories which need to be explained, but to analyse if and how they are constructed in different societies and different groups within them (Fishburne Collier and Yanagisako, 1987: 20)[16]. In Boserup's work, for instance, it is assumed that the public sphere encompasses the domestic sphere and is culturally accorded higher value. As a result, the importance of the domestic sphere is dismissed or undervalued, and the opportunity for examining the nuances of how these domains are constituted and interrelated is lost.

Reform and the shifting boundaries between public and private domains in post-socialist societies

As I pointed out in the opening to this chapter, in Kazakstan, as in other post-socialist societies, the redefinition of public and private domains is central to the new macro-level paradigm of development being imposed on local populations and espoused by local elites. Policies have been premised on a particular understanding of the way state and private sectors of the economy and different associative spheres are constituted in modern democracy, how they were constituted and interrelated under socialist regimes and how this relationship should change in order for these societies to 'develop normally'.

This understanding is clearly expressed in a communiqué by the Kazakstani President on the nation's development strategy, which makes an explicit link between withdrawal of the state, the growth of individual economic and political freedom and development (Nazarbaev, 1998). The communiqué states that, despite its achievements, the old system was not economically competitive and, in comparison with market democracies, failed to provide citizens with an adequate standard of living. Consequently, the state must now withdraw from many of the functions it performed under the command economy, which are not under state control in 'normal developed countries' and 'create conditions in which free citizens and the private sector can take effective steps for themselves and their families'. Although much remains to be done, already, as a result of wide-ranging social, economic and political reform, and specifically the shift from a 'state-collective vision to a private-individual one', it is asserted that 'people have become free'.

The restructuring process initiated by perestroika and accelerated since the dissolution of the USSR is therefore presented as the forging of a new social contract, by which the state will

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[16] For a more detailed exposition of the domestic/public dichotomy in feminist theory see Rosaldo, 1974 and Ortner and Whitehead (1981) and for later critiques of the model as a universal opposition, see Rosaldo, 1980; and Fishburne Collier and Yanagisako, 1987).

withdraw, liberating individual motivation and participation and increasing efficiency. One aspect of this vision of change is economic: it is argued that in the state-socialist command economy, the public/state sector swallowed up the private/market sector, leading to economic stagnation and underdevelopment. Accordingly, one focus of reform efforts has been privatisation and the creation of functioning markets. Another aspect is political: it is argued that the socialist state also encroached too far into the sphere of 'private' associative life, leading to political repression and lack of individual freedom. Another focus has therefore been to encourage democratic reform by fostering 'good governance' and the emergence of citizens' groups and organisations.

In the post-socialist context, a spatial metaphor is commonly used to describe this changing relationship between the individual and the state: with the withdrawal of the socialist state, an area is revealed where private institutions, voluntary organisations, free markets, free expression of ideas and free exercise of religion can be imagined or realised. This space is often referred to as 'civil society', a concept that will be explored below. As a critique of this position, various alternative arguments concerning the changing nature of public and private domains and the shifts in the boundaries between them, have been developed in the post-socialist context. These have pertained particularly to 1) gender issues, specifically women and 2) the construction of 'civil society' and the exclusion of various groups from full citizenship. These critiques suggest that shifts in the boundaries between the state and the economy and between the state, civil society and households are creating new forms of inclusion and exclusion and, particularly, that the process is not a gender neutral one.

Post-socialism and the construction of civil society

The concept of civil society has had a long career in European political thought, but has experienced an enormous theoretical rebirth in recent years and was taken up as a rallying call by the international donor community and many post-socialist governments in the 1990s[17]. The concept has been used in different ways. Most expansively, in the post-socialist context, the entire space between the individual and the state, including private enterprises and the institutions of the market economy, is sometimes termed 'civil society'. More narrowly and more frequently, the term is used to refer to a sphere of un-coerced collective action between the state and the market where social movements become organised, and comprising organisations such as voluntary associations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, community groups, business associations and advocacy groups (UNDP, 1993: 1). As Wedel (1994: 323, cited Hann, 1996: 1) describes, the absence of a space for individuals and groups to organise independently of the state is generally taken to be one of the defining features of the communist system and international donors working in post-socialist countries have therefore seen the creation of 'civil society' as an intrinsically positive objective. It is not only in post-socialist countries that civil society in this sense has gained currency. In the Western democracies too, neo-liberal policies promoting the retreat of the state have also highlighted new roles for civil society organisations in providing a

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[17] For detailed analyses of the history and uses of the concept of civil society, see for example, the introduction to Cohen J.L. and Arato, A. (1992) *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, Gellner, E. 'Civil society in a historical context', *International Social Science Journal,* 129, 1991 and Keane, J. (1998) *Democracy and Civil Society*, London: Verso.

range of different services. Civil society is also seen by some as playing a growing 'watchdog' role in reigning in the power of the state and ensuring the democratic accountability of governments at national and even international levels.

In Kazakstan, one of the foci of Western development agencies has been the (re)creation or seeding of civil society. A multitude of projects have sought ways of bringing non-state, non-market groups such as farmers' associations, community groups and women's organisations into being and helping them to organise effectively. However, the extent to which the Kazakstani governnment is actually encouraging political, as opposed to economic freedom, is a moot point[18]. Whilst economic liberalisation and privatisation have proceeded apace, democratic reform has lagged far behind. As the previous extract from President Nazarbaev's communiqué illustrates, local elites have effectively hijacked civil society discourse, conflating it with the idea of imposing the market and particularly private property rights, as a way to teach people 'civilisation' and help them unlearn the 'corrupted ways of socialism'. Kalb (2002: 319) argues that civil society in Central Asia has 'become an item for luxury consumption' which has enabled local networks of well-educated citizens in the main urban centres to form NGOs and do 'good work', but has delivered far less than promised to the rural population, small town industrial workers, the less educated, women and children. On the contrary, in these populations 'it has consciously taken away some of the tools and public goods previously taken for granted, as the basis for life projects. It has also done much less than governing elites and global institutions have been willing to concede: while the powerful were gathering for a celebratory banquet, the civil society programmes have stolen the weapons of the weak' (Kalb, 2002: 319).

Across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, anthropological accounts of post-socialist reform have investigated power and social relationships and the redistribution of risks, resources and opportunities[19]. They challenge the claim that the withdrawal of the state and the shift towards individual rights, notably the right to own property, necessarily enhances the rights of all citizens in any *substantive* way. On the contrary, the shift towards formal-legal notions of universal rights in post-socialist societies may be matched by the loss of the entitlements to which citizens had become accustomed under socialism. Many of the Soviet Union's ethnic groups benefited from policies that, while significantly restricting individual freedoms, also constituted positive discrimination that provided security, social services and well-being to remote communities (Anderson, 1996; Konstantinov and Vladimirova, 2002). The shift to a model that emphasises juridically equal individuals, linked to the imposition of a market economy, is also leading to impoverishment and insecurity, in short to the breakdown of trust that is supposed to be a hallmark of civil society. Thus, far from being pitted against the state and benefiting from its withdrawal, some ethnic groups and communities may have relied on the state to provide the conditions for their sustainability and development. It is suggested that this was particularly the case for

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[18] See for example Evgeny Zhovtis' discussion on freedom of association in Kazakstan in Holt Ruffin and Waugh (eds) (1999) *Civil Society in Central Asia.* Seattle and London, Center for Civil Society International and University of Washington Press: 57-70.

[19] The premises of this critique were set out clearly in the introduction to Hann and Dunn (eds.), *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models* (1996) and are explored through the anthropological accounts written by the various contributors to the volume. See also the later volume Hann (ed.) (2002), *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia.*

rural communities, where civil society has been utterly unable to substitute for the destruction of social networks, social capital and hope among village inhabitants after liberalisation and privatisation (Hann, 1996: 8; Kalb, 2002: 320). This may also be particularly pertinent to the situation of women, as I shall explore below.

In addition, these critiques raise the issue of how relevant the western concept of 'civil society' is to the post-socialist societies and highlight the importance of examining the 'invisible' practices which fall altogether outside the framework of the civil society model. One of the main tenets of the mainstream civil society literature is that, due to their pre-Soviet feudal political culture and Soviet colonisation, Central Asian societies have an 'undeveloped' civil society, or a 'lack of social capital'. Accordingly, the debate revolves around how – and whether – civil society can be brought into being through external intervention and aid. In these terms, 'progress' is measured in terms of the growth of formal institutions such as NGOs and associations. In contrast, anthropological critiques suggest that society, whether 'civil' according to this definition or not, *does* exist and can be an actor in the reform process. In his analysis of kolkhoz and civil society in Central Asia's independent states, Roy (1999) argues that it is a mistake to see Central Asian societies as deprived of any social fabric. Although existing forms of trust, solidarity and moral community in post-socialist society, including networks based on extended families, neighbourhoods and collective farms, have largely been ignored by development agencies, they may be central to survival and entrepreneurial strategies (Hann and Dunn, 1996; Roy, 1999). Conversely, this social fabric may be structured by power relations and inequalities – including gender-related imbalances – which are now interrelating with the economic and social thresholds of exclusion and inclusion being introduced by the market.

Gender and the shifting boundaries between public and domestic domains

The espousal of a western, liberal model based on the withdrawal of the state and the (re)emergence of the market and civil society may well not benefit women and men equally as citizens and individuals or may actually restrict women's citizenship (Rai et al, 1992; Einhorn, 1993). Feminist analysis highlights that liberal Western political theory obfuscates or ignores the domestic sphere of family and kinship relations. It is argued that Western democracies have been built on a gendered association of men/public/production and women/domestic/reproduction, which has led to the marginalisation of women in both state and market spheres and their exclusion from full citizenship (Pateman, 1989).

The extent to which this Western feminist theory is applicable to the changes taking place in post-socialist societies has been broadly debated in the literature on gender (or generally women) and transition. Analysis has focused around several issues: the role of the socialist state in guaranteeing, or failing to guarantee equality and full citizenship for women; the ways in market and democratic reforms change this gender regime, either by increasing gender discrimination or opening new opportunities; and the specific configuration and interrelationship between public and domestic spheres in state socialist societies, as compared with Western democracies, and the implications of this for attempts to analyse the current transformation using Western models and analytical tools.

One strand of analysis suggests that Pateman's framework is particularly apposite in post-socialist societies, where the state played a proactive role as a guarantor of women's right to participate in public life (Rai et al, 1992; Verdery, 1994). In effect, the socialist state altered the relation between gendered domestic and public spheres familiar from nineteenth century capitalism, socialising significant elements of reproduction and drawing women into the labour force (Verdery, 1994: 232). It is argued that the substantive entitlements to education, paid employment, maternity leave and childcare which underpinned women's participation in the public sphere may well be placed at risk by the rolling back of the state and the introduction of the market economy. As Verdery puts it :

> 'The end of socialism means the end of a state that assumed significant costs of biological and social reproduction, instead of assigning most of these costs to individual households, as capitalist systems have done. If, as some scholars argue, the gender organization of the capitalist household cheapens the cost of labour for capital by defining certain necessary tasks – 'housework' – as non-work (and therefore not remunerating them), then the economies of post-socialist Eastern Europe will be viable only with a comparable cheapening. Thus the end of socialism necessarily means making once again invisible, by feminising them and reinserting them into households, those tasks that become too costly when rendered visible and assumed by the state.' (Verdery, 1994: 253-4).

A further argument for the ambiguity of the rolling back of the state for women in post-socialist countries is the gender assymetries and inequalities left in place or created under the socialist system. Both ideology and practice continued to emphasise women's primary responsibilities in the domestic sphere, imposing a 'double burden' of paid employment and unpaid domestic labour that was not shared by men (Fong, 1993). Further, the Soviet labour market continued to be highly stratified by gender. Although better educated than men, women were concentrated at the low-paid, unskilled and semi-skilled end of the labour market and were also absent from the top layers of the political and economic hierarchy (Bruno, 1995b; Warshofsky Lapidus, 1978; Buckley, 1989). The space revealed by the withdrawal of the state was therefore not an 'even playing field' but a landscape shaped by gender stratification and inequality. As Bruno (1995b: 74) describes, 'the category 'women' was a highly discriminated one which had been distanced and had partly distanced itself from the dominant *loci* of Soviet public and political life and sources of power'. In addition, the logic of reform itself was not necessarily gender neutral. Already, in the mid-1980s, the discourse of *perestroika* (restructuring) creating a universal public realm of civil society had been undercut by a specific gendered discourse of citizenship[20]. The renegotiation of the relationship between the state and the individual in the perestroika period was accompanied by calls for the relocation of women from the public to the domestic sphere, justified by the notion that women's emancipation, or 'over-emancipation' was a distortion of socialism which the new political leadership must overcome. The 'rights' of women were redefined as

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[20] Here civil society is to be understood in the broader sense. Funk and Mueller (1993) make the point that in Central and Eastern Europe also, stress on women's domestic roles was already been evident in official discourse before the 'watershed' date of 1989, often taken as the start point of transformation. In the Soviet Union, the re-emphasis on women's domestic role should be seen in the context of an existing shift in emphasis related to fears about a demographic crisis. For a discussion of this, see for example Lapidus (1978) and Buckley (1989).

the opportunity to return to their 'truly womanly mission' in the home (Pilkington, 1992: 108).

Women as 'victims' of change

Women and men are therefore likely to stand in different positions in relation to the retraction of the state and market reform. Since the perestroika period, this framework has been used to shed light on the gendered aspects of 'transition' ideology and policy, suggesting that women were likely to be particular losers, with the ideology of state-building and nationalism and market reform forcing them out of the labour market and into the domestic domain (Fong, 1993; Rai, et al, 1992; Bridger et al, 1996).

The early negative prognoses have been borne out in the wealth of mainly macro-level, quantitative, research conducted over the past decade, which has demonstrated that, throughout Central and Eastern Europe, women have been hit disproportionately hard by both falling living standards and unemployment during the initial phase of the 'transition' (Einhorn, 1993; Funk and Mueller, 1993). Economic restructuring and privatisation have resulted in proportionally higher female unemployment and increasing pay differentials, with women poorly represented in the better paid private sector workforce (Bridger, et al.: 1996). This process has been matched by an erosion of social, including reproductive rights, fuelled by a backlash against socialist ideology on equality and a resurgence of 'traditional' ideas on 'women's place'. Similarly, democratisation has paradoxically led to a dramatic decline in women's representation in formal politics throughout the former socialist bloc. So, although the negative impact of reform has been felt by these societies as a whole, women have paid a greater price than men.

Compared to the wealth of research on the impact of transition policy on women in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, research in the newly independent Central Asian states was relatively late to appear and is far less extensive. However, the analyses which have been produced, largely for international organisations such as the UNDP and the Asian Development Bank, paint a similar picture (Bauer et al, 1997; Bruno, 1997; Kuehnast, 1996; Mendikulova, 1996; Tlenchieva, 1996; UNDP, 1995, 1996, 1997a, 1998; Usacheva, 1997). According to a study conducted in Kazakstan in 1997 for the Asian Development Bank, the social and economic costs of transition (falling incomes, increasing unemployment, eroding social services and weakening social assistance support) are affecting both sexes but are falling disproportionately on women (Bauer et al: 26)[21]. The study concluded that restructuring was leading to strain on the family system and change in family and gender roles, amid the emergence of serious social problems. It also suggested that restructuring was impacting differently on urban and rural populations, with rural women particularly disadvantaged because isolation compounded the breakdown in employment structures and

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[21] A comparison of gender disaggregated employment data for 1990-94 showed that job reduction over this period impacted on women more than men in most major sectors. In total, the number of jobs occupied by women decreased between 1990 and 1994 by 22.7%, whereas the number of jobs held by men shrank by only 10.2%. In 1993, more than two thirds of those officially registered unemployed were women, and in rural areas the percentage exceeded 80%. Although evidence was patchy, women were also over-represented in hidden unemployment.

limited alternative opportunities. On the other hand, one of its interesting insights was that women tended to be more active and flexible than men in looking for new employment, particularly in the informal sector of shuttle trade, and in many cases were taking on the role of family breadwinner.

Women as 'agents of change'

This insight, although not fully explored in the report, points to the second, emerging strand in the literature on women and the transition in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which speaks to the theoretical developments described above in connection with the concepts of *human agency* and *feminisation of subsistence*. This research suggests that, as well as investigating ways in which re-structuring may be having a negative impact on women in areas such as employment, it is important to look at how different groups of women are acting as 'agents of change'. Research on urban women in Russia has argued that women may have developed proto-entrepreneurial behaviours under the Soviet system in order to cope with breakdowns and gaps in Soviet provisioning, and that these may serve as a basis for entrepreneurship in the new conditions (Bruno, 1996b; Pahl and Thompson, 1994). Similarly, field-based research being conducted in rural areas of other post-socialist countries at the same time as my own was beginning to suggest that women were playing a key role in trading and household based agricultural production (Dumitrescu, 1999; Momsen and Kukorelli, 1999). However, it was also highlighting the complexity of local impacts and responses. Although there did seem to be an emerging trend towards male domination of the emerging private farm sector and female domination of the subsistence sector, not only was there a wide variety of patterns, but their meaning, for men and women, both in relation to each other and within each group, could not be taken as read, not least because of the values attached in different contexts to the state, the household or the new market domain.

Cultural meanings of public and domestic domains

One of the things that many Western feminist commentators have found most challenging in relation to the 'relocation' of women to the home is the reaction of many Central and East European women themselves, who have seen it not in terms of a loss of rights, but as a potentially positive development (Funk and Mueller, 1993; Bruno, 1995b). This has raised debate as to whether Western feminist diagnoses of the relationship between public and domestic in terms of subordination were applicable to the culturally specific situation in the Soviet Union.

One argument is that women's desire to return to the home, or at least have the choice to do so, could be explained by their actual experience of participation in social production, which, far from being liberating had been experienced in terms of drudgery and exploitation. The gendered structure of the state socialist labour market, which had positioned women in low-prestige and low-pay sectors of the economy, had given women 'negative images of themselves as workers and associated the private sphere, the home and the role of mother rather than worker, as the sphere in which self-expression might be achieved' (Pilkington, 1992: 111).

Another argument is that socialism itself generated a specific demarcation and relationship of public and domestic spheres, which needs to be taken into account in order to understand how people are shaping and reacting to current changes (Hann, 1993; Einhorn, 1993; Funk and Mueller, 1993; Verdery, 1994). According to this thesis, contrary to ideology, the 'non-state' domain was actually more significant than the domain dominated by the socialist state. It is posited that the operative dichotomy in state socialism was not that of public/domestic but of state/family, in which the family itself was an ersatz public sphere or a 'surrogate civil society' (Einhorn, 1993: 129; Funk and Mueller, 1993: 5). Citizens created their own networks and engaged in family-based income-generating activities, not merely to help them cope with economic shortage, but also to provide them with positive values and identities lacking in socialism. In terms of gender relations and gender inequalities, it is argued that, although the family was actually characterised by gender inequity, with women responsible for the vast majority of domestic labour in addition to their full-time jobs outside the home, women were also fiercely defensive of the family as a haven from an intrusive state and over-politicised public domain and drew enormous strength from the key role they played within it and that this is a key factor in women's current responses to change (Einhorn, 1993).

Clearly, if state socialism generated a specific relationship between public and domestic domains, then it is likely to be affected by the creation of a market sector. Here, the 'mainstream' women and transition literature has tended to argue that the domestic sphere has lost the significance it inadvertently gained as a substitute civil society and that, in this new constellation, the values attributed to the state and family spheres in state socialism have simply been reversed. Whilst, previously, unofficial networks depended on the family and women's role in it, but this was not recognised in official discourse, now public discourse glorifies the family and women's place in it, whereas in practice, it is the public sphere of the market place and mainstream political institutions that are the important arenas (Einhorn, 1993: 129). However, this macro-level argument again leaves open the question: important for whom and in which settings? Recent, more micro-level research, such as Pine's (1994, 1995) analysis of two contrasting areas of rural Poland, suggests that the actual value and meaning of state, market and family or kinship domains need to be investigated in local contexts. In her example, the degree to which local communities, and the individual men and women comprising them, were integrated – or not – into the socialist state, was a key determinant of their current perceptions and trajectories.

The existing gendered critiques of 'development' in general and post-socialist 'transition' in parrticular, therefore provide useful frameworks for analysis. The literature on capitalist modernisation suggests that macro-level rural development policies can lead to new regimes of inequality and exclusion at micro level. As far as gender is concerned, policies may either intend to affect gender relations or may have unintended effects because gender issues are not taken into account at the planning or implementation stages. Whilst women may be particularly vulnerable with respect to capitalist development models, this cannot be assumed. Gender relations need to be investigated in local contexts, with analysis of the sexual division of labour, access to power and resources and cultural norms and models. In particular, they suggest that the question of gender issues in the transformation of rural areas in Kazakstan can usefully be addressed through the prism of the debates around the changing relationships between the state and private sectors and between the associative spheres of the

state, civil society and households. Critiques of the mainstream liberal model being applied in post-socialist societies suggest that the creation of new boundaries between these domains create new forms of inclusion and exclusion and, given men and women's different social loci, that the process is not a gender neutral one. On the other hand, from the point of view of continuity, the experience of the Soviet modernisation/development project suggests that ways in which different groups conceptualise these domains and the relating gender roles and identities may be resistant to change and may shape responses to programmes imposed from outside in particular ways. In particular, in the context of rural Kazakstan, a salient question is, to what extent is reform leading to the marginalisation of women from the public sphere and their relegation to a subsistence or domestic sphere? And further, are these meaningful categories and if so, how are they constituted or interrelated in particular communities and groups and how are these relationships shifting?

The research on which this thesis is based therefore aimed to explore how public and domestic domains were constituted in the research communities and whether and how the boundaries between them were shifting as a result of the present transformation in rural areas, looking at four main issues: 1) How public and domestic domains were constituted and differentiated, if they were in fact differentiated a) in pre-Soviet b) in Soviet Kazakstan; 2) Whether the relationship between public and domestic domains is currently shifting and if so how; 3) To what extent these domains were stable categories and to what extent they were destabilised by different political/economic regimes; 4) What, if anything was the relevance of civil society (i.e. to local, rural communities, as opposed to the urban intelligentsia and Western agencies?

CHAPTER TWO

The Accommodation of Soviet Development and Indigenous Society

'The imprint of the past is reflected in deeply psychological ways, which greatly affect behaviour in the economic realm and modernisation as a whole' (Lubin, 1984: 207).

At first sight, there is little to distinguish former *sovkhoz* Lenin or Druzhba either from each other, or from any other former collective or state farm community throughout the former Soviet Union : the same standard model of straight, dirt roads lined with whitewashed, one-storey houses, with their vegetable plots out front and farmyards out back; the same public buildings - school, kindergarten and culture club, hospital, post-office and farm administration, where the formerly ubiquitous statue of the Soviet founder still stands, pointing the way to the glorious communist future.

That vision of the future is now changing, and with it the shape of the community over which Lenin, for the time being, continues to preside. However, before investigating this transformation, and particularly its gender implications, it is important to set it in the context of the earlier socialist vision and the interaction of the latter with local traditions and identities.

As I suggested in Chapter One, the current capitalist development project in Kazakstan is not starting from a 'tabula rasa' but from an existing social fabric, shaped by the meeting of a nomadic, pastoralist society and socialist development policies and infrastructures. In this context, Caroline Humphrey (1995) has pointed out that there were important local variations in the frameworks of the state or collective farms that were 'on paper, the same everywhere'. Not only did the ideological blueprint not always correspond to the reality of 'actually existing socialism', but local concepts of community, kinship, economy and autonomy variously shaped responses to the Soviet modernisation process in ways unforeseen by the State (Pine, 1995). Like all large, abstract, development plans, Soviet modernisation was pursued by ordinary men and women in small, concrete worlds of human relations in households, villages and peer groups, and it was on these microcosms that its outcome ultimately depended (Massell, 1974). The same is now true for the current capitalist development project, which, like its predecessor, aims to act upon existing society. Both raise the question of how far revolutionary transformation is possible and, conversely, how and to what extent local structures and lifestyles may serve as obstacles to engineered change or may shape it in particular ways.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to explore the landscape inherited by the current capitalist development project in Kazakstan, with particular reference to my own research communities. Given the particular history of the region, which has experienced extremely rapid modernisation, it is important to look, not only at the recent Soviet past, but also at the pre-Soviet period and the interaction between the Soviet state and the traditional, indigenous society it sought to transform. How did the Soviet state seek to disrupt or change the indigenous model of the economy and society? How successful was it, in its own terms, in

doing so? Were local models resistant to change and if so, how was this resistance structured and manifested? And, with specific reference to gender, what was the place of gender in the indigenous model, the Soviet modernisation project and local responses to it?

I. The Indigenous Kazak Economy

Limitations of the literature on the indigenous model of the economy and gender relations

While conducting my fieldwork, I found that the distant past was often evoked in terms of the position of women and, conversely, that projects for 'proper' gender relations in the present often drew on images of the past. What was particularly striking was the contrasting perceptions of the pre-Soviet past described by my informants. Whilst some stressed the life of drudgery and suffering led by women and the progress which had been made under the Soviet regime, others would affirm that Kazak women were always more liberated than others in Central Asia, pointing to the fact that they were never secluded and never wore the *parandja*[22], but rode on horseback alongside their men and that their skills and courage were praised in Kazak folklore and ballads. Still others affirmed that 'in the past, Kazak women always sat at home' and that this was a proper expression of women's place in indigenous and/or Islamic culture. This contested picture is indicative of individual informants' own relationship to the Soviet past and post-Soviet present, and of the way in which gender identity, cast in terms of 'the woman question' was central to Soviet modernisation policies and is now a key idiom in the 'renaissance' of the indigenous past.

The existence of such diverse representations is also connected with the contradictory picture of gender relations painted in the ethnographic literature. Although there is a considerable body of ethnographic work dating from the Tsarist Russian expansion into Central Asia in the late 19th century and from extensive surveys conducted in the early post-Soviet period, it is marked by various gender, ethnocentric and political biases that make it difficult to draw a balanced picture of social relations. Virtually all contemporary accounts were written by non-Kazak outsiders, who were engaged in various ways in the European/Soviet 'civilising' project, which saw the Kazak nomadic way of life in terms of its inferior position in a linear march of progress and development[23]. Moreover, both during the Tsarist and Soviet periods, ethnographic accounts were written within the highly politicised context of the expansion of the Russian, then Soviet state into Central Asia[24]. What is missing from these accounts is a detailed study of Kazak social structure, and particularly of the perceptions and understandings of Kazak men and women themselves with relation to their lived experience.

With respect to gender analysis in particular, the scarcity of detailed ethnographic description, especially from the perspective of indigenous women, has meant that gender relations have, at various times, become part of different, and often contradictory,

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[22] The heavy horsehair veil that covered women from head to foot.
[23] One notable exception is the Kazak scholar, Chokan Chingisovich Valikhanov, who compiled more insightful information than his contemporaries on Kazak cultural history and ethnography, but was also Russian educated and served as an officer in the Tsarist military.
[24] See Kandiyoti (1996) on the specific relationship between Soviet ethnographers and the state, which distinguishes their role from that of anthropologists in colonial encounters of the West.

'mythologising projects' to depict the past in the interests of present concerns (Akiner, 1997). Both pre-Soviet and Soviet research tended to use the 'position of women' instrumentally as a way of pointing to the relative backwardness of traditional Kazak society and the need for 'civilisation' to be imported from the outside. This is particularly true of material from the Soviet period, which used the 'oppression of women' as a cipher for the exploitative 'patriarchal-feudalism' of Kazak society. In contrast, in the current period other versions of an idealised indigenous past, uncorrupted by Russian or Soviet elements, are being 'rediscovered' or reinvented by the state to serve as an inspiration for nation building and future development. I will return to this in Chapter 3.

One way of circumventing these problems would be to turn to oral life histories as a means of reconstructing a 'more accurate' picture of the past. However, this presents a number of difficulties. In practical terms, few of the generation who experienced the pre-Soviet way of life are still alive. Yet, interestingly, even the authors of one of the few in-depth ethnographic studies of collective farm communities in Kazakstan, conducted in the 1960s, comment on the problems they experienced in using oral histories to draw a historical topography of the pre- and immediate post-revolutionary period (Margulan, 1967). Over time, people develop myths and prejudices about the past, meaning that the picture drawn seventy years later will differ from the picture that would have been drawn contemporaneous to events (Roberts, 1973)[25]. Moreover, as Caroline Humphrey (1992) has pointed out with relation to Mongolia, the profound rupture resulting from Stalinist transformation makes taking oral histories an even more problematic proposition. The total displacement of society and culture brought about by Stalinism means that the past is viewed across a chasm. The time before the socialist period becomes another world, a 'deep past' whose detail is obliterated and whose memory, even for those who lived through it, is distorted. On the other hand, as suggested above, these very myths and distortions tell a story of their own. What people hold on to in their current reconstructions of the past speaks to how they interpret and structure their lives in the present and how they imagine the future. It also speaks to the ways in which personal memory is shaped by wider narratives of national history and culture. My argument here is that the past, like the present, is a contested space, where identities are continually negotiated[26].

Bearing in mind the limitations of the available material, the following section sketches a putative gendered model of the indigenous social economy in pre-Soviet Kazakstan. As well as referring to the existing literature, it sheds oblique light on social and gender relations through examining the structure of the indigenous economy as a whole, specifically in terms

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[25] Referring to oral histories of the Edwardian period, Roberts notes that 'Some professional inquirers into the past have persuaded the elderly both to reminisce and to complete lengthy questionnaires covering aspects of their lives in youth. This can of course yield valuable information, social and historical. But a certain caution is needed. During the '30s and '40s I often talked with people who were already mature by 1914. They criticized the then fairly recent past, faculties alert, with what seemed some objectivity. But by the '60s myths had developed, prejudices about the present had been set hard; these same critics, in ripe old age, now saw the Edwardian era through a golden haze!' (1973: 25)

[26] For an example of the use of oral testimonies in a post-Soviet context, see Skultans (1998) study which explores and theorises the relationship between the Soviet and pre-Soviet past and between personal and social narratives of the past in contemporary Latvia.

of sources of value and the constitution of public and domestic domains, which were radically altered during the Soviet period[27].

The landscape of the Kazak indigenous economy

Who were the Kazaks and what was the topography of the Kazak indigenous economy? The territory of vast open steppe and mountains which now comprises the state of Kazakhstan has been settled by successive waves of peoples. One of these was the Kazaks, pastoral tribes of mixed Turkic and Mongolian origin, which united in confederations in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Like other nomadic groups of Central Eurasia, the Kazaks' social organization was based on patrilineal descent groups. At the lowest level, the basic social and economic unit in Kazak society was the family, which owned the livestock that was central to nomadic life. In turn, families were united in lineages, small groups of close patrilineal kin, known as *uru*, whose genealogy could generally be traced back to a founding ancestor[28]. Each *uru* formed an encampment, known as an *aul*, which might also comprise other more distant kin or non-kin. *Auls* varied in size, comprising anywhere from three to fifteen or more households with 4,000-5,000 sheep, 300-800 horses, 80-100 cattle and 60-200 camels (Benson and Svanberg, 1998)[29]. The size and composition of the *aul* fluctuated over time, as descendants of the leader branched off to form their own auls, typically when the father passed to each son his 'share' (*enshi*) in inheritance of household property and livestock or when the land it occupied could no longer ensure effective grazing (Martin, 2001: 22). Each encampment was a socio-economic unit in its own right, but was also identified with a wider clan, with which it united in times of danger *or* during certain stages of transhumance. In turn, these large patriline groups came together to form larger entities, on the same principle. Thus, at the highest level, the Kazaks were divided into three 'hordes' (*zhuz*), the Great or Large Horde (*Ulu Zhuz*), the Middle or Central Horde (*Orta Zhuz*) and the Lesser or Small Horde (*Kishi Zhuz*). Each *zhuz* was an independent political entity, headed by a khan or sultan from the "*ak-suiek*" (white bone) dynastic caste, descendants of Chingis Khan[30].

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[27] I do not intend to suggest that indigenous Kazak society was a static entity to be broken open and changed by Soviet interventionist policies. My analysis aims to break down this essentialist conception of 'traditional' society and to highlight that the encounter between Tsarist, then Soviet colonial power and indigenous society was one between two, changing and dynamic entities.

[28] There was (and remains) a good deal of confusion regarding divisions and subdivisions of lineages and the use of particular terms (Hudson 1938: 17-19; Benson and Svanberg, 1998; Martin, 2001: 22). Using extensive ethnographic survey material gathered at the turn of the 19th century, Rumyantsev (1913: 119-121) suggests that one issue may be the disappearance of more subtle lineage differentiation under changing economic conditions, particularly the penetration of agriculture. He also points to several examples of groups which presented themselves as genealogically related (descendants of one individual) actually having a much more complex form. He himself witnessed the 'creation' of a lineage in Lepsinskii oblast when a group of different ethnicities (descendants of Sarts and Kyrgyz) invented a founding ancestor and the genealogy linking them to him. He concludes that, to some extent, the notion of *uru* was therefore a fiction, but a necessary one in the social structure.

[29] Hudson (1938: 24) draws a distinction between the *yj* (family or house) group of five or ten yurts and the bigger *aul*, comprising many such groups.

[30] The power of the khans and sultans is disputed. Whilst mainstream Soviet ethnographers subscribed to the 'feudal' categorisation of Kazak society comprising a ruling stratum and a servile one, others have argued that the majority of society was composed of free tribesmen. For further details of the opposing analyses of power relations in Kazak society see Gellner, (1988): 92-114.

Two points are worth highlighting here : first, that the whole social body was conceptualised in terms of extensions of kinship, more specifically agnatic affiliation, with all Kazaks situated in branches of a universal genealogy; and, second, that power was not concentrated in a centralised state, but highly decentralised, with local entities having control over both social matters and economic resources (Bouchet, 1991). In effect, the nomadic pastoral economy was structured around agnatic kinship groups, which were at once political, economic and social units.

The mainstay of the Kazak economy and the lynchpin around which the entire cultural system was structured, was the herding and management of livestock. In Central Asia herds consisted, 'as the Mongols say, of the five animals: sheep, goats horses, cattle, and camels. Of these, sheep and horses (were) the most important, but the ideal (was) to have all the animals necessary for both subsistence and transportation so that a family or tribe (could) approach self-sufficiency in pastoral production' (Barfield, 1993: 137). The livestock owned as family property were not only a source of food, clothing and transport, but also the main criterion of wealth, social status and position, measured primarily according to the size of the family, *aul* and clan herd.

Land was not owned as private property by the khans or other individuals, but held in common by the clan, which migrated seasonally to its different pasture grounds[31]. Migrations followed a yearly cycle, and were either vertical or horizontal, according to climate and geographical location. In the South, near the Alatau mountain range, flocks were wintered in the valleys and moved up into the mountains in spring and summer. In the central steppe lands, where former *sovkhoz* Lenin is situated, migration routes tended to be longer, sometimes covering many hundreds of kilometres[32]. The *aul* would leave the winter pasture (*qistau*) in March or April for the spring pasture (*kokteu*), for lambing, commonly a fixed place used by the same group over a period of years. In May or June the group would move to the summer pasture, (*zhaylau*), where animals were milked and a range of dairy products produced. Then, at the end of summer, came the move to the autumn pasture (*kuzin*), where sheep were sheared. Once back in winter pasture, some animals would be sold and others slaughtered for the *aul's* own consumption.

Before turning to what the available sources can tell us about gender relations, it is worth placing them in the context of the wider arguments around the relative egalitarianism or exploitation in indigenous Kazak society, which has been a particularly contentious issue. As Gellner (1988: 96) points out, whilst Soviet scholars tended to stress the inequalities of power within this social system, Western scholars were often struck by the relative

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[31] For a detailed ethnographic account of Kazak systems of land claims and land use see for example Rumyantsev (1913: 90-119). Unfortunately, his account does not include detailed gender analysis of these systems.

[32] According to Bajirov (1992) in the second half of the 18th century, over 80% of Kazak families migrated over distances varying from 300 to 1,000 kilometres, from south to north and the same amount again on the return journey.

egalitarianism of nomadic societies like the Kazakh, particularly in comparison with Asiatic sedentary cultures[33].

One argument is that, although there was a degree of social differentiation, it was mitigated by a system of patronage and dependency, based on concrete and specific traditions. Bajirov (1992) states that the economic stability of the *aul* depended on the ability of all its members to conduct transhumance and on their having the means (particularly transport) to do so. The kinship-based division of labour meant that large and powerful households were bound in a relationship of interdependence with middle-sized and small households with fewer livestock. Whilst the former required the labour of poorer kinsmen and women, the latter, who did not control sufficient herds to ensure survival, were ensured subsistence through providing their labour according to a series of contractual arrangements. These included poorer households offering the labour of their sons to larger herd owners, or *sauyn* by which the latter gave livestock into the care of the poorer households, which cared for them in return for a proportion of the young or for produce, such as milk or fleece. Rather than being seen as a wealthy exploiting class (Abramzon, 1973: 237) the larger households could therefore also be seen as a kind of 'protective umbrella' for the poorer ones within the *aul* (Sagadiev and Bekturganova, 1998). Indeed, Humphrey suggests that this giving out of livestock for herding in exchange for use of the milk and wool and perhaps some of the young was 'so general, among all the pastoralist peoples of Central Asia at all periods, that it should not be seen as 'exploitation' but simply as the fundamental mechanism by which labour was adapted to the existing herds' (Humphrey, 1998 [1983]: 281). As Black points out in his study of the Lur-s in Western Iran, this type of system contains both elements of egalitarianism and elements of inequality of resources and control over them. Insiders and outsiders may evaluate the balance between them very differently. In addition, whilst the system may remain 'the same' the balance can alter significantly in different circumstances (Black, 1972, cited Eikelman, 1998). In the case of Central Asia in general and Kazakstan in particular, it has been suggested that, by the time of the Soviet domination, erosion of the pastoral economy due to Slav settlement and the introduction of market relations had made sufficient inroads in some areas to alter the balance towards capitalist forms of stratification and inequality (Massell, 1974: 16-17; Sagadiev and Bekturganova, 1998).

The kinship-based division of labour can also be seen in the context of a wider system of what Sahlins terms 'generalized reciprocity' linking households within the *aul* and wider clan community[34]. What I mean by this is that individual households were bound into a web of exchanges of livestock, labour and other services, some of which took place on an informal level and some of which were 'institutionalised' in ritual practice and custom, particularly

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[33] For a recent analysis of the relationship between egalitarian aspects and inequality in pastoralist society, see Galaty, J. 'Justice among equals: Disdain, inequality and stratification among egalitarian pastoralists in East Africa', paper presented to the IUAS XVth Congress, Florence, 7-8 July 2003. Available at: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~cpnc/CollectedAbstracts.pdf Last Access 9.4.2004.

[34] In Sahlin's definition, generalized reciprocity occurs where goods and services are not consumed by or retained by individual households, where individuals or households who perform labour for others do so in an altruistic fashion, the material side of the transaction is repressed by the social, the counter obligation is not stipulated by time, quantity, or quality or the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite (Sahlins, 1972: 194, cited Netting, 1993: 169).

feasting[35]. Community life was therefore governed by a kind of 'moral economy'[36] based on the sharing and redistribution of resources, which both provided a safety net to insure against subsistence failure and conferred status and reputation.

A similar refocusing on mutuality and interdependence can also be applied to the analysis of gender relations in pre-Soviet Kazak society, generally also described in terms of the exploitation and subordination of women.

Women as chattels or women as resource persons?: re-examining the position of women and gender relations in Kazak society

As Hudson (1967) describes in his study on the Kazak social structure, there is no consensus on the position of women in the Kazak family (1938: 40-41). On the one hand, both Radlov (1893) and Levshin (1840), the two classic Tsarist era ethnographic accounts on which much subsequent work was based, see women as, at best, subordinate and, at worse, as slaves. Radlov considered Kazak women to be worse off than among the Kalmuck and saw the *kalym* (bride wealth) as evidence that men treated their wives as property (Radlov, cited Hudson, 1967: 40), whilst Levshin states that a woman's sole recompense for her toil was to be treated as a slave by her arrogant and severe master. On the other hand, Levshin also recognised that, even when the husband had no particular affection for the senior wife (*baibishe*), he was obliged to respect her and to compel the other wives to do so also (Levshin, cited Hudson: 40). This point is reiterated by Lansdell (1885) and made even more forcefully by Karutz (1911) who specifically denied that the relationship between husband and wife was that of master and slave, stating that the household was harmonious and that the wife held a respected position (cited Hudson, ibid: 41). Although inconclusive, at the very least, this literature suggests that age, as well as gender, hierarchies played a significant part in Kazak society and that their interrelationship needs to be investigated, particularly in so far as it gave women avenues for power in accordance with increasing seniority.

However, the subsequent Soviet literature is framed almost entirely in terms of the oppression of women in the traditional family and wider society[37]. The majority of Soviet analysts paint a powerfully emotive and overwhelmingly bleak picture of Kazak women's lives, stressing their lack of formal rights, their exclusion from public life and positions of authority and the unremitting drudgery and abuse to which they were submitted within the family[38]. Abramzon, (1973: 238) for example, states that the strictly patriarchal structure of

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[35] In her recent study of law and custom in the Middle Horde, Martin (2001: 22-23) lists a number of other clan-based forms of mutual aid, including *zhurtshiliq,* aid for the purpose of paying a debt, *zhilu,* aid in case of natural disaster, *qizilkoteru,* giving of lambs in equal portions from each clan herd to the member groups that had suffered loss of sheep, and *tasimal,* rich helping poor during migration.

[36] This term was coined by EP Thompson, who used it to refer specifically to the moral obligation between the state and workers. It was then picked up by James Scott (1985), who used it to distinguish between the sense of local community, responsibility and entitlement and the market and state political economy. It has subsequently been used in this sense by anthropologists working in rural areas, including, in the postsocialist arena.

[37] See Section III of this chapter.

[38] This literature is explored in detail in Gregory Massell's extremely comprehensive study on women in Soviet Central Asia (1974) and is also summarised in Janice Baker's study on the position of women in Kazakstan in the Interwar years (1985). One interesting exception is the detailed four-year

Kazak and Kyrgyz society made it 'one of the most backward in the Russian empire' in which all power lay with the senior male and women 'merely had a few rights in the domestic sphere'.

This last comment, in particular, points to the assumptions concerning the subordination of women and the existence of - and hierarchical relationship between - public and domestic domains, which underlie the majority of both Tsarist and Soviet analyses. By engaging new theoretical approaches with the available ethnographic material, it is possible to outline an alternative perspective. These raise three questions that push forward the analysis of social and gender relations. How did gender hierarchies interrelate with different forms of authority and hierarchy? Were there other, informal avenues of power open to women that were not foregrounded in contemporary and Soviet analyses? And is the analytical framework of public/private domains appropriate for understanding gender and wider socio-economic relations in indigenous Kazak society?

Drawing on historical sources and current research on semi-nomadic tribal communities which function outside state structures and traditions, Turkish historian Isenbike Togan (1999) concludes that age, rather than gender, was the most important dimension of hierarchy in Central Asian nomadic societies. Age sets, inequalities, interdependence and subordination to the elders shaped the lives of men, as well as women[39]. Conversely, everyone could be acknowledged as senior, irrespective of gender. Both men and women were therefore bound up in age hierarchies, which determined their status and carried particular obligations, responsibilities and privileges. Applying this framework to the patrilineal structure of Central Asian nomadic society, she suggests that women accrued more authority from the lineage than has so far been acknowledged. She notes that although the system was one of patrilineal descent, within it, social status was determined by the mother's status. (Togan, 1999: 182). Martin expands on this by giving the concrete example of the Argin clan, which was divided into a number of sublineages of different statuses (2001: 22-3). As the son of Argin's senior wife (*baibishe*), the lineage of Meyram and his offspring occupied the highest status in the kinship hierarchy, followed by the sublineages of the seven sons by his second wife, with the lineages of the offspring of Argin and his youngest wife at the bottom of the hierarchy. She points out that this hierarchical status helped organise land usage, redistribution customs and political leadership at all kinship levels.

It is therefore likely that gender interrelated systemically with seniority and wealth in constituting authority and property regimes. One issue of particular interest is women's access or control over the key resources of land and livestock. Soviet sources often cite *adat* and *shariat* (customary and islamic law) as elements of Kazak society that demonstrate the subordination of women. They argue that women 'belonged' to the clan and had no property or individual rights of their own, as demonstrated through patrilocal residence on marriage, bride wealth, and the fact that a mother had no rights to her children in the event of her

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ethnographic study of the Kazak '*kolkhoz aul*' conducted in the 1960s by the Kazak Republic Academy of Sciences (Margulan, et al, 1967). This more nuanced account draws explicitly on oral histories.

[39] For a detailed investigation of homosocial hierarchies in a neighbouring Central Asian nomadic group, the Turkmen tekes, see Bouchet (1991).

husband's death (Baker: 1985). However, the more nuanced ethnographic literature suggests that the actual situation was more complex.

First, marriage was essentially a moral, legal and economic union between clans rather than an individual matter, meaning that neither men nor women had individual rights as such. Both sons and daughters were subject to their father's or lineage's authority in terms of choice of marriage partner and divisions of family property (Akpaev, 1907)[40]. Another source states that, in the poorest families with no livestock of their own, who lived with wealthy relatives, it was not the father, but the head of the clan (*bai*) who decided on marriage partners (Margulan, 1967: 174-5).

Second, the usual Soviet interpretation of bride wealth as trading women for cattle and housing also needs to be reassessed in connection with the available ethnographic evidence and current debates on bride wealth and dowry systems. Margulan's study asserts that the bride wealth (*kalym*) for sons was matched by the *zhasau* (dowry) for daughters 'so that they would be valued and respected in the husband's family' adding that sometimes, especially in wealthy families, it exceeded the bride wealth many times over. It is now argued that neither bride wealth nor dowry can simply be read as signifiers of women's status or lack of it in a given society (Moore, 1998: 64-72; Comaroff, 1980, Watson, 1991). Bride wealth may actually be an acknowledgement of women's value or serve as protection for women against divorce (Eikelman, 1998: 166). Conversely, dowry does not necessarily give women greater economic security, status and independence within marriage (Sharma, 1980: 48, cit. Moore 1988: 70). Sharma's analytical distinction between the kinds of property received by sons and daughters may be applicable to Kazakstan, where sons' property share (*enshi*) comprised a yurt and livestock, the elements necessary for independent subsistence, whereas daughters' dowry mainly comprised jewellery and other moveable goods. Dowry may therefore have been a mechanism for maintaining sons' rights in property rather than a recognition of daughters' right to share in patrimony. However, the fundamental issue of how much control women could exert over their own dowry, before and after marriage, and how this affected wives' power and authority, is now difficult to resolve.

More broadly, the assumption that women were excluded from the 'formal' legal sphere is also challenged by recent research, which suggests that the recording of customary and islamic law distorted their practice, particularly the shifting, informal relations which underpinned them. Both Massell (1974: 123) and more recently, Martin (2001: 4) argue that the relationship between the written record and actual practice of *adat* and *shariat* in local contexts is not clear. Martin, in particular, points to the way in which, by codifying oral Kazak customary law, Russian written sources 'froze' practices that were actually flexible and continually evolving in relationship to changing local economic and social circumstances. By doing so, they also imposed an artificial dichotomy between a formal, jural, and an informal, community sphere that were actually intricately connected. Martin

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[40] Akpaev's ethnographic study of marriage law notes that reciprocal rights and duties between the two kin groups were embodied in both ritual and law. The name of the written act, the *khoirykh-baur* (*khoirykh* - fatty part of sheep; *baur* - liver), refers to the food eaten at the occasion, the liver symbolising the spiritual link between the relatives of the bride and groom, who are to become one, like the two parts of the liver (1907).

does not explore this process from a gender perspective. However, if, as she states, the 'patriarchal legal arena ... was almost solely a male world' (ibid: 170) this may have been because a gender-blind Tsarist colonialism artificially constructed it as such. As she states, Russian scholars and officials drew on the knowledge of male (sic) nomadic judges, kinship group leaders, political elites and Islamic scholars. If women's voices were not heard in this process, this may have reflected their actual exclusion or marginalisation, but codification may also have obscured the ways in which women could use customary law to uphold their interests. Tantalisingly, in later chapters, Martin explicitly draws on material from court records which suggests that some women at least used extremely sophisticated strategies for pursuing their own property and inheritance claims through the customary and Tsarist courts (ibid: 100-103). My own research suggested that, in some areas, women's claims to land were, at least, informally recognised[41].

Might Kazak women have had many more avenues of informal power available to them than have appeared in contemporary accounts? In her study of female forms of power in peasant society, (Rogers, 1975) argues that the apparent hierarchy of dominant male/subordinate female, reflected in the formal, jural, sphere and local ideologies, may mask actual relations of interdependence and obscure how women wield power in 'informal' or 'covert', and therefore invisible, ways. She also raises the question of where the locus of power and value is situated. If, as in her model, the domestic unit was central to social, political and economic life, women may have been able to control a major proportion of important resources and decisions[42]. Pre-socialist Kazak society has not been analysed through this framework, but, again, Togan's work suggests that it may be a useful one. According t her argument, a more nuanced reading of power structures shows that women accrued more authority from the decentralisation of power than has so far been suggested:

> In this system, where the authority of the state was absent, women's position was determined by the structure of the microcosms in which they lived. Because these microcosms were semi-independent units there was more emphasis on the reproduction of hierarchy within these units. As women did not pose a threat to the non-centralized state authority they were able to acquire greater authority in their microcosms in comparison with women in centralized state structures. Women of these societies appear in their microcosms as more powerful matriarchs who organised the lives of not only their immediate, but also their extended, families. (...) Nomadic women enjoyed more political authority than sedentary women, and took part in public decisions to a much greater extent than the latter. (Togan, 1999: 172)[43]

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[41] On *sovkhoz* Lenin, none of my Kazak informants seemed to have detailed knowledge about their families' former territory, or how it had been allocated. However, on Druzhba and particularly Sarybulak, several people knew (or claimed to know) where their *uru's* land was. On another former *sovkhoz* in the mountains south-east of Almaty informants also told me that many of these territories had women's names (Fieldnotes, 6/12/96)

[42] It has been assessed in connection with Russian peasant society. Glickman, for example, argues that it cannot be applied to Russian peasant women, although she also stresses that the lack of data makes it difficult to speculate on informal arrangements or women's own perceptions of their situation (1990).

[43] The question of the relative oppression or freedom of women in state and nomadic societies is contested. See, for example, Watson's exploration of how the state in Imperial China variously challenged or strengthened women's rights during different periods (1994: 347-368).

Togan goes on to introduce the serious caveat that women's authority was 'in general social and not backed by control over economic resources (...) which remained in the hands of the microcosms, the lineage and extended family'. Similarly, the above-mentioned study of the Kazak *kolkhoz aul* (Margulan, 1967) makes the same proviso that, although in many families the wife had influence over her husband and respect from children and clan members, the father was head of the family and controlled family property. However, the study also notes that in the domestic economy, the wife had wide powers and her husband as a rule did not interfere in her domain.

Women's major role in the domestic economy is acknowledged in the Soviet literature, but interpreted as further evidence of their slave status. Surveys conducted in 1929 on the division of work in Kazakh households assert that Kazakh women performed over 62% of the labour and concluded that a woman's activities were of far greater significance to maintaining the family economy than a man's, since she performed 80% of all chores and activities that were necessary to the life of the family and its place in the community. In 1929, women apparently erected the yurt, did all work concerning cattle, the household and care of children and sewed all items of clothing. The men only played with the children (Baker, 1985: 86)[44]. Was Kazak women's considerable work in the domestic economy further evidence of their exclusion from the 'real' power process and low social status? If this picture is accurate, a rather different interpretation is possible – i.e. that women had significant and substantial power that has not been highlighted in contemporary accounts.

One of the assumptions which may have led to this being overlooked is the distinction between valued public and undervalued domestic spheres, which may be totally inappropriate in the Kazak context[45]. The association of the domestic with the demeaning or

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[44] One interesting eyewitness account of *aul* life at the turn of the 19th century comes from Lady Macartney, the wife of the British Representative in Kashgar from 1890 to 1918, whose account of gender relations is quoted in full below ([1931] 1985: 146-7).

'The women, although they are Mohammedans, are very free and go about unveiled. Their dress is much like the dress of the ordinary women of the plains. But their headdress is a marvellous arrangement of white muslin, wound round and round many times till it looks like an enormous cocoon. Sometimes it is pure white, with silver ornaments and fringed embroidery hanging down over the ears and shoulders, and sometimes the muslin is of a pale colour, with an embroidered edge. The shape and colour of the cocoon varies according to the tribe of the Kirghiz. For full dress, or when they travel to a new encampment, the women put on all their finery and are loaded with necklaces of coral and silver, heavy silver ornaments finish their plaits of hair, and silver rings cover their fingers. Of course, living this outdoor life makes it impossible for them to be secluded and consequently they are independent and self-possessed. The men are often away looking after the animals, which wander great distances up the hillsides, or are working in the fields; and the whole encampment is left to the womenfolk, who do all the work at home of milking, rearing young animals, bringing up their children and making the family's clothes. It is also their work to put up and take down the Ak-ois, when they move, and the men stand by and watch them do it. They also make the felts and all the embroideries, and fancy cords and straps for the adornment of their tents. They do not seem to have large families generally speaking, and the infant mortality is very high, due to the hard Winters in the mountains and the prevailing ignorance of sick nursing: so the strongest survive and grow up into very hardy men and women. The women are almost as much at home on horseback and camelback as the men, and we used to see them riding over the roughest and steepest of roads, carrying a baby and with one or two children riding behind.'

[45] For example, Soviet analyst, S.M. Abramzon sees the fact that women lived in separate quarters with the domestic utensils as evidence of their being treated like slaves or domestic animals (S.M. Abramzon 'Reflection of the Process of the Coming Together of Nations in the Family Life and Daily

less than social is not a universal feature of thought. As Leacock suggests, the key issue is not whether labour is domestic or public but whether individuals or categories of person control access to resources, the conditions of their work and the distribution of the products of their labour. Her analysis of Iroquois society is apposite here. As she writes :

> Iroquois matrons preserved, stored and dispensed the corn, meat, fish, berries, squashes and fats that were buried in special pits or kept in the long house... women's control over the dispensation of the foods they produced, and meat as well, gave them de facto power to veto declarations of war and to intervene to bring about peace. Women also guarded the 'tribal public treasure' kept in the longhouse, the wampum, quill and feather work and furs... The point to be stressed is that this was 'household management' of an altogether different order from management of the nuclear or extended family in patriarchal societies. In the latter, women may cajole, manipulate or browbeat men, but always behind the public façade; in the former case, 'household management' was itself the management of the 'public' economy (Leacock, 1978: 253; cited, Moore, 1988: 32).

As in this example, the indigenous Kazak economy does not fit comfortably into the Western analytical framework of 'public' and 'domestic' spheres at all. On the one hand, there was no 'public' sphere in the sense of the development of a centralised state or of an 'economy' as such. As stated above, society was highly decentralised, with political, economic and social power concentrated in small-scale communities where power and authority were inextricably bound up with kinship relations. Similarly, the extended family was both a unit of consumption and production, an independent world or microcosm unto itself. Given that household production and management were simultaneously 'public' economic and political life, a separation between 'domestic' and 'public' spheres is meaningless. Although gender and age were two fundamental structuring principles of Kazak society, it therefore makes little sense to analyse gender relations using this framework.

Another approach is suggested by work such as that of Ardener et al (1993) on the way in which the ordering of society is expressed in spatial terms, particularly the ways in which space operates as a metaphor for critical aspects of identity, including gender. The importance of the spatial dimension in the cosmology and world view of the Kazaks has been underlined (Timoshinov, 1997: 46). It is suggested that the oppositions between above and below, inside and outside, were central to the conception of the human person and the relationship between people, landscape and cosmos. These were not necessarily hierarchical oppositions, but complementary ones, stressing the importance of maintaining harmony (ibid). This question has recently been re-examined in Anne-Marie Vuillemenot's (1996) doctoral research on body and space in Kazak society. She sees this principle embodied in the yurt itself, where female and male spaces are demarcated under the encompassing circle of the *shanyrak* (the smoke-hole wheel and lynchpin of the entire structure), which symbolises harmony. Moral values and ideas about proper social relationships between men and women, elders and juniors were therefore inscribed in spatial patterns. In this sense, the difference between men and women's labour can also be seen in terms of an inside/outside division. Men performed the 'outside' labour of herding, hunting and conducting trade and

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Habits of the Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan' in *Soviet Sociology*, Vol., no 2, Fall 1962, p. 48 translated from *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* no. 3, 1962, cited Baker, 1985).

exchange beyond the *aul*, whilst women performed the 'inside' labour around the camp and in the yurt[46].

Soviet accounts, based on assumptions about the value and importance of public and domestic suggest that the relationship between these domains was one of domination and subordination. However, their interrelatedness is equally striking – it may not be the case that the male domain encompassed or dominated the female domain, but that male and female were demarcated but equal and interdependent parts of a whole. On the other hand, the relationship between these spatial domains is not necessarily fixed but may be construed differently at various times (Togan, 1999). In opposition to past analyses which have presented 'traditional' society as a static entity, Togan examines the way in which gender hierarchies changed over time, in relation to a number of different factors, such as centralisation/tribalisation and islamicisation. She concludes that in different periods these forces brought out different types of hierarchy and authority and shaped different cultural conceptions of women's roles. One explanation for the controversy surrounding the position of women in Kazak society may be that processes such as islamicization and Tsarist colonisation themselves led to gender hierarchy being imposed on earlier, more egalitarian male/female relationships based on shamanistic cosmology, thereby producing a syncretic combination of old and new elements (Hudson, 1938; Vuillemenot, 1996).

Economic and cultural change prior to Sovietisation

The annexation of Kazakstan by the Soviet state was the culmination of a long process of Tsarist expansion, marked by the imposition of Russian administration and increasing settlement of Russian peasants on the Kazaks' pasture lands. By the beginning of the 20th century, the latter process, in particular, was eroding the sustainability of the indigenous pastoral economy, particularly in the densely settled South, and capitalist market relations were beginning to impinge on the indigenous economy and social structure in some regions (Akiner, 1995, Brill Olcott, 1987). Contemporary accounts point to the divergence between central Kazakstan and Semi'rechie, the areas where the former Lenin and Druzhba state farms, respectively, are now situated (Rumyantsev, 1896). Whilst in the first, transhumant herding continued to be practised, in the second, where fertile land was at a premium, herding had to coexist with different forms of land use and was maintained only in areas where settled agriculture was not possible[47]. Semi'rechie as a whole was distinguished by its mixed herding/agricultural economy, with the majority of Kazaks cultivating some crops, including millet, barley and wheat (Rumyantsev, 1896; Argynbaev, 1973)[48]. The Verny (now Almaty) region was also the most highly developed from the point of view of development of trade and industry. Rumyantsev's (1896) ethnographic study of the region traces the

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[46] Vuillemenot suggests that the boundary between the outside, or 'wild' and the inside, of 'family' was the post to which horses were tied.

[47] This is not to say that the indigenous socio-economy remained unchanged here. See, for example, Virginia Martin's (2001) account of law and custom in the Middle Horde for a sensitive exploration of the interraction between local society and the Tsarist colonial apparatus and settlers over this period.

[48] It is estimated that only one fifth of the Kazakh population in this area sowed no crops (Rumyantsev, 1896). Although most pastoral societies also cultivate some crops (Eickelman, 1998: 72), this represented a change in traditional practice. For a fuller description of Kazakh involvement in cultivation see also Bajirov (1992), and Rumyantsev, (1896).

impact of these changes on kinship, custom and social structure. His account suggests that the introduction of agriculture was linked with a changing relationship to land, marked by the demarcation and private ownership of both pasture and arable land. It was also linked with a weakening of the clan structure and growing social differentiation. Although wealthy families continued to engage in transhumant herding, the poorer ones remained in their winter quarters and the *zhataki*, those with no land or livestock of their own, were increasingly drawn into trade, transport and other forms of employment. He notes that a considerably higher proportion of men than women engaged in such labour, with women mostly trading for wealthy relatives or working in textiles and weaving. Explaining that the practice of women working outside their own domestic economy was strictly condemned by the Kazak population and was a rare exception, he comments that, 'it will be some time before, under the influence of civilisation, Kazak women will cease being an object of sale and exchange and themselves begin to sell their labour power'. His comment presages an important part of the Soviet development project, which will be explored in the next section of this chapter.

II. The Soviet model of development

Soviet power was established in Kazakstan after the October Revolution of 1917. In 1920 Kazakstan became an autonomous republic of the USSR, and then in 1936 a union republic. Whereas the Tsarist state was largely content to administer its new territories without attempting to alter existing social and economic relations, the Soviet development project aimed to radically transform existing indigenous society (Patnaik, 1996). Three aspects of Soviet ideology and practice had a major effect on people's life worlds: ideas about labour and value, gender ideology and, underpinning both, an evolutionary model of development, drawn from the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, that placed nomads at the beginning of the evolutionary process. The following section examines how these ideas were played out in terms of economic structure and social relations, particularly the changes brought about in the articulation of public and domestic spheres and thereby in gender domains.

Underpinning the Soviet development model was the idea that all societies evolve through particular stages - primitive, communal, slaveholding, feudal, capitalist and socialist – each characterised by particular productive and social relations (Anderson, 1995: 37). Each stage was seen as an advance over earlier ones, with the transformation of the means of production fuelling changes in social relations and culture. The question of where the indigenous societies annexed by the Soviet state were located in this framework became crucial to the development policies applied there. As Tolstov put it in 1934 :

> This problem is by no means merely of academic significance.... its solution enables us to sharpen our weapon of a correct Marxist understanding... it is relevant to the immediate practice of class war both in the Soviet East and abroad, in the colonial Orient... the correctness of the practical work of the socialist reconstruction of the nomadic and semi-nomadic *aul* of the Soviet East depends on the correct theoretical solution of this problem (cited Gellner, 1988: 99).

Classification of nomadic society, proved to be a major headache for state ethnographers, and debate over appropriate responses continued until the late 1920s (Gellner, 1988: 97)[49]. The issue was ultimately resolved under Stalin on primarily political and economic grounds. Those who believed that socialism could be built on a surviving kin community were labelled as 'right and left-wing deviants'. The orthodox view became that genuine kin communities had been replaced by feudal relations using 'kin camouflage', and it was therefore necessary to use class struggle to wage an outright assault on social relations (Tolstov, 1934, cited Gellner: 100)[50]. This coincided with a shift from a gradualist to a more proactive approach to economic change and the inauguration of mass mobilisation of the population for rapid industrial development. The modernisation project undertaken by the Soviet state therefore came to be premised on a radical break with the past. 'Modern' ideas and institutions were to be imposed on pastoral or peasant rural populations, and this involved both building new structures and attacking existing ones, including the family, which were perceived as constraints on social, political and economic change. Two of the key loci of change were labour and value and gender relations.

Sedentarisation and collectivisation: changing loci of labour and value

In the Kazak pastoral economy, although the family, *aul* or clan had an interest in increasing the size of its herds, it did not aim to convert the surplus into money wealth, but to symbolically mark its power and status. At the same time, growth was limited by a range of factors, including the size of the kinship-based labour-force, ecological conditions and the principles of reciprocity which bound the community. Conversely, both Marxist and liberal economic thought subscribed to a same shift from this type of economy and view of the world to a 'modern' industrial one (Jacob, 1994). Whereas the aim of peasant economy is subsistence, the aim of industrial development, whether capitalist or socialist, is growth and maximisation of production[51].

In Soviet ideology the relationship between the two forms of economy was seen as evolutionary. Large-scale factory production, then characteristic of capitalism, was regarded as being capable of fulfilling a higher level of human needs than artisan labour (Lane, 1986). It was concluded that the pastoral and peasant economy of Central Asia needed to be restructured for higher productivity[52]. This would not only provide food for the newly

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[49] However, see Gellner's account of the problems faced by Soviet ethnographers in adequately categorising nomad society (1988). The Marxist framework failed to account for the stability and self-perpetuation of nomadic society, or for the combination of collective and egalitarian traits and private ownership.

[50] As we have seen, this may have been true in some regions, but in any case, in rural parts of the former Russian empire, Soviet reforms became contingent on identifying local economies as following the cultural logic of capitalism together with exploiting and exploited classes (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2000 : 13).

[51] Gudeman and Rivera's (1990) distinction between the house and the corporation could also be applied here. According to their definition, the project of the house is to maintain itself, meet necessities and increase its holdings by keeping its remainders as a reserve. Conversely, the project of the corporation is to make a profit, invest and increase it.

[52] Since the time of Stolypin in the first decade of the 20th century, a stream of agronomists had advocated cultivation of cereal crops on the steppe pasture lands of Kazakstan and southern Siberia.

established industrial centres, but would also open the possibility of using the labour of the peasant and indigenous population in 'socialist construction'.

The first plank in this policy was sedentarisation. Overturning the ethnography of the 1920s, which had suggested that this would be undesirable or even harmful, it was decided under Stalin that the Kazaks 'had to be sedentarised and introduced to agriculture' (Margulan, 1967: 3). The overt justification for this was philanthropic. The Soviet 'enlighteners' presented nomadic life as one of constant hardship, with little security of shelter and food, poor hygiene and total isolation from the benefits of twentieth century urban culture, such as medical care and education (Forsyth, 1992). However, this philanthropy hid a further subtext connected with the 'evolutionary' model of development, which attached specific moral and value judgements to nomadism versus settlement, pastoralism versus agriculture. Drawing a comparison with Annie Jacob's work on the meeting of 'civilised man' and 'savage' in the New World, the Soviet attitude can be seen in the context of the shift in value which began with the enlightenment and the birth of economics, and was articulated around changing ideas and representations of work and the relationship to the natural world:

> Economics (...) relies heavily on an evolutionist vision of the world in which Western society is considered to be superior, 'civilised' whilst the savage is perceived as a past Self, relegated to our past and destined to become like us, provided he submits to our beliefs and our rules of economy oriented towards the search for growth. He must agree to work according to our criteria, and the history of colonisation demonstrates that 'putting the savage to work' was the issue which recurred the most frequently and was the most difficult to resolve. The point of radical rupture is the relationship to the earth, particularly the relationship to agriculture, which most fundamentally transforms the function of work and 'civilises' mankind. (Jacob, 1994: 246)[53].

To achieve modernisation, the 'lazy savage', who doesn't maximise either his production or his needs, and is therefore contrary to the objectives of economic society and civilisation, has to be transformed into a 'worker', who must produce, then develop needs to increase consumption. In both liberal economic (Adam Smith) and Marxist thought, work therefore becomes a central social value and a primary source of social legitimacy.

For the Soviet state, the indigenous populations of Central Asia stood in a marginal position to this model of productive labour. Transhumant livestock herding, in particular, was not perceived as productive work, but something else, often defined in terms of 'backwardness', or 'laziness'. Part of the 'mission' of Soviet society was therefore to 'civilize the nomads', and a major part of this was 'teaching them how to work'. In the 1950s propagandising novel, *Ochevidets* (Eye-witness), by the Kazak writer, Gabiden Mustafin, which I came upon by chance in the school library on Lenin *sovkhoz*, I read, 'The Kazaks are poor because they are lazy. If they learned to work from the Russians, life would get better'.

A link was therefore drawn between evolution, progress and ethnicity. As 'elder brothers', the role of the more 'civilised Slavs' within the new state was to educate and 'develop' their ethnic 'younger brothers'. However, more generally, a line was also drawn between urban

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[53] My own translation from original French text.

and rural populations throughout the Soviet Union. Not only the Kazaks and other socially and economically 'backward' ethnic groups, but also the peasants of the Russian heartland itself had to be imbued with 'progressive' attitudes to work and the peasant economy as a whole radically changed. Again, debate over how the restructuring of the rural sector could best be achieved raged throughout the 1920s. Although a few thinkers, such as Chayanov, were convinced that peasant family farms were viable and could compete successfully with large-scale capitalist or collective farms, the orthodox view was that 'agriculture based on family farms (was) transitory and obsolete' (February 1919 Regulations Concerning Land Administration, cited Shanin (1990): 303). As Lenin himself put it, the 'waste of human power and labour as is involved in small peasant economy cannot go on any longer. The productivity of labour and the economy of effort would be doubled and trebled in agriculture, if, from the present disjoined individual system, we could pass to one of collective tillage' (Maynard, 1942: 359, cited Netting, 1993: 295). After the Revolution, attempts were made to move towards state-managed family farming and communal organisation. However, the reformers met widespread peasant resistance to state-control and the idea of large farms, and attempts were largely curtailed with the move to the free-market under NEP[54]. It was not until 1929, with Stalin's rise to power and the 'turn to the left' that radical transformation took place, in the form of the rapid and dramatic mass collectivisation campaign[55].

Collectivisation became the second plank in Soviet rural development policy. Throughout the Soviet Union, it was as much politically as economically motivated, as the Stalinist state sought to crush opposition and dissent. This was particularly marked in Kazakstan, where Stalin's determination to root out the nomadic economy and so end the political authority of the old social order meant that collectivisation went hand in hand with forced sedentarisation.

> Settlement is collectivisation. Settlement is the liquidation of the *bai* semifeudals. Settlement is the destruction of tribal attitudes... Settlement is simultaneously the question of socialist construction and the approach of socialism, of the socialist reconstruction of the Kazakh mass without divisions by nationality under the leadership of the vanguard of the proletariat and the Communist Party. (F. I. Goloshchekin, First Secretary of the Kazakh CP, cited Brill Olcott, 1987: 183).

By late 1936, only 150,000 Kazakh nomadic households remained in the republic, most in the deserts of Central Kazakstan. Nearly 70% of the Kazak population had been settled in grain producing areas. However, the cost of this attempt to convert millions of nomads and semi-nomads into sedentary farmers and industrial workers was catastrophic. In protest against the enforced collectivisation of their livestock, households began to slaughter their animals. The massive reduction in the overall livestock numbers resulted in severe famine. One estimation is that over one and a half million Kazaks – about 25% of the entire Kazak population – died as a result of violence and starvation during the 1930s and loss of human life was proportionately greater in Kazakstan than anywhere else in the Soviet Union.

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[54] For a more detailed account of changes in rural policy in this period, see for example, Shanin (1990: 313-318).

[55] Brill Olcott's account of the period suggests that Kazaks had had little exposure to collectivisation principles before 1929. In January that year, 99.1% of all livestock in the republic were still privately held and 92.7 percent of cultivated land was still privately owned (1987: 177).

(Akiner, 1995: 63; Brill Olcott, 1987: 184-187; UNDP, 1995)[56]. During the 'Great Terror,' Slav peasant farmers in Kazakstan were also repressed and 'kulaks' from elsewhere in the Soviet Union forced into exile there, mostly in labour camp settlements[57]. Moreover, collectivisation came after the violence of the 1918-21 civil war and the serious famine which followed the extreme winter of 1920-21 and preceded the upheaval and hardship of the Second World War.

The landscape of my research communities and the histories of the older generation of informants were strongly marked by these experiences. Even now, the trauma of this period is such that it is largely surrounded by silence, particularly for Kazak villagers. Akiner (1995: 63) notes that, unlike the Holocaust or the Armenian genocide, collectivisation and sedentarisation 'as yet remain uninterpreted and in a way non-existent periods in the national experience'[58]. She found that although Kazaks often acknowledge its traumatic impact, they 'do so with a curious sense of detachment, as though it were not located in actual, recorded, time, but rather in some abstract past' and hypothesises that this may be because 'there were few family survivors to keep alive memories of the dead, that subsequent Soviet propaganda described the period in glowing and optimistic terms, because the modern way of life was created in the vacuum left by the destruction of the old or because of the scale of the disaster was so great that it could not be consciously comprehended and was therefore blocked out' (ibid). On Lenin, none of my Kazak respondents spoke in detail about what had happened to them or their families[59]. However, I did learn that the origins of former Lenin *sovkhoz* lay in the destruction of the area's peasant farms (*khutory*) and the forced settlement of *auls* from the *Satylgany* and the *Kozgany*, two lineages of the Kazak middle horde. The whole region was also scattered with labour camps for Slav, Greek, Chechen and German deportees, many of which later became collective then state farms in their own right. The detailed individual or family histories I did hear were recounted by Slavs, who told of being forcibly removed from their smallholdings or coming to Kazakstan in the aftermath of famine or the upheavals of world war two. Their stories bore witness both to the pain of the violent rupture people experienced during the Stalinist era and the ways they then managed to reconcile or even identify themselves with Soviet values and institutions[60]. This ambivalence was reflected in the way that stories were told. Memories about life before collectivisation veered from nostalgia and loss to evocations of poverty and disease, and memories of the horror of collectivisation into stories about the benefits of life on the *sovkhoz*. In men's stories, collectivisation often segued into memories of their service experience in the 'great patriotic

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[56] According to Brill Olcott (1987), herd size did not return to pre-collectivisation dimensions until the 1960s.

[57] This was one of several waves of deportations to Kazakstan. Between 1935-1940 there were repeated deportations of Poles from western parts of Ukraine, Belorussia and Lithuania. During the 1941-1945 war Germans from the Volga region of Russia, as well as Chechens and Ingushes from the Caucasus and others, were also forcibly resettled in Kazakstan.

[58] This traumatic period is now beginning to be explored more openly. In 2004, a Museum of Repression was opened in the former NKVD (secret police) headquarters in Almaty.

[59] The same was true of *sovkhoz* Druzbha. However, on Sarybulak, people were more willing to talk about this period, although mostly in terms of the livestock their family or clan had possessed prior to collectivisation and where their grazing territory had been.

[60] See the appendix on life histories for illustrative examples. Other poignant sources on this period include the memoirs of Berta Bachmann (1983), a Volga German, Dombrovsky's semi-autobiographical novel 'The Keeper of Antiquities' and Chingiz Aitmatov's novel, 'The Day Lasts More than a Century'.

war' and their honoured status as veterans. Many women stressed that they had been left alone to cope with hardship as their husbands and male relatives had either been repressed or sent away to fight. In their stories, memories of 'before' the *sovkhoz* were often bitter ones of poverty or abandonment by family, whilst memories of the *sovkhoz* itself focused on the growing stability and standard of living it had brought and their pride in their own work.

As one Kazak man described: 'Then they couldn't get people to come together. Now they can't get people to split apart'[61]. Stories from the *sovkhoz* illustrated that collectivisation, war and modernisation in general brought radical changes both to people's daily lives and to the structures and value systems in which they were played out. Over a very short period, the focus of Kazakstan's economy changed from agrarian, to agro-industrial (1932), to industrial-agrarian (1938). By 1941 the volume of industrial production had grown eight times compared to 1913. Thus, by the end of the 1930s, Kazakstan was transformed from a land of pastoral nomadism into one with large-scale and diverse industry, intensive crop-growing and animal husbandry (UNDP, 1995). Ownership and control over land and livestock had been removed from households or kin groups and placed under state ownership in collective farms. The role of the *aul* as a decision-making group had also been transferred to the state and communist party structures. In theory, at least, the organisational structure of the collective farm was based on labour specialisation rather than kinship, and did not reflect traditional age and gender hierarchies. As Humphrey describes, 'there (were) no economic-political functions for kin groups wider than the family in official Soviet society' (1998: 267).

Collective farms also redrew indigenous domains, delineating boundaries between domestic and public spheres, production and reproduction. Whereas, in the nomadic pastoral world, family and work had been integrated for both men and women, collectivisation created a separation between a 'public' world of labour and collective production and a 'domestic' world of the family. Soviet ideology held up work for the collective as the principle source of value and identity for both men and women. Public labour was not only a contribution to development and progress, it was also a moral duty and obligation which was to take precedence over other family obligations, for women as well as men. Indeed, one of the specific features of the Soviet development concept was this emphasis on women's participation in the public sphere.

The place of gender relations in the Soviet development project

Uniquely for the period, the Soviet state explicitly recognised the pivotal importance of women's roles to modernisation. The resulting deliberate and long-term efforts to draw women into political and economic life in large numbers, to alter family roles and demographic patterns and to inculcate new cultural norms in support of these expressed an innovative attempt by the state to incorporate the mobilization of women into a larger strategy of development (Lapidus, 1978: 11).

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[61] Fieldnotes, 6/12/1996.

Soviet policy on the 'woman question' explicitly linked female emancipation with bringing women out of the household and into socialised labour. To cite Alexandra Kollontai, (1984 [1921]) 'without the participation of women workers and peasants, victory on the labour front is impossible; on the other hand (...) the complete and actual emancipation of the 70 million women of the working republic is equally impossible without the introduction and implementation of the principles of the communist economic system.' Family-based production and consumption were not only seen as backward or traditional but also as, 'the basis upon which rested the former enslavement and dependence of women'; conversely, it was thought that socialist collective production and consumption would remove women's 'former dependence on the capitalist boss and husband cum bread-winner (Kollontai, ibid).' Socialist development would therefore enable women to participate in the public sphere, which would, in turn, enable them to break free from oppression. However, by so doing, it would also ensure that women's potential could be mobilised and harnessed for the goals of the state. The motivations behind state gender policy were therefore complex and contradictory, marked by tension between a genuine commitment to improving the position of women and a more instrumental attempt to mobilise the population as a whole for productive labour and political support for the regime[62].

Theory and policy on gender relations also reflected the class and ethnic aspects of the evolutionary model of development described above. A distinction was drawn between the vanguard of urban women workers who were already 'conscious of their rights' and had 'bound their future to the future *of* communism' and the 'peasant woman, as yet only timidly following in their wake' (Kollontai, ibid). Lower still, as outlined in the opening section of this chapter, the 'woman of the East, awakening from age-old slavery' was seen by Soviet theorists and activists as suffering from particular oppression. Ideologically, it was argued that, since these 'patriarchal-feudal' societies had not yet passed through the capitalist stage, the objective conditions for solving the woman question did not exist. Women in these societies had endured a triple oppression of class, nationality and family. First, they had suffered, like men, from class oppression before Bolshevik rule. Second, years of oppression as members of various nationalities reduced their self-determination, even after revolution. Third, in family life, women were subject to feudal-patriarchal relations which meant that they lacked rights to a much greater degree than Slav women (Buckley, 1989: 82-3). In view of this, it was decided that particular measures would be necessary to challenge gender discrimination and draw women into public life.

The campaign for the emancipation of Central Asian women therefore grew out of the theory and practice of Russian Marxist feminism, drawing inspiration and moral support from leading activists such as Nadezhda Krupskaya, Klara Zetkin, Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai (sometimes credited as being instigator of the movement in Central Asia) (Stites, 1978: 332)[63] As a strategic priority, the project was organised and monitored by the central organs of the Communist Party in Moscow. Initially, action took the form of changes in legislation. Between 1918 and 1926, the Soviet government focused on creating a legal

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[62] For a more detailed historical perspective on the evolution of Soviet ideology and practice on the 'woman question', see for example, Warshofsky Lapidus (1978) and Buckley (1989).

[63] However, see Azade-Rorlich (1996) for a discussion on jadidism and the indigenous women's movement which predated Soviet power.

framework codifying women's rights and an organisational infrastructure to enforce them. Although *shariat* and *adat* courts continued to function alongside Soviet courts until 1928, their powers were circumscribed and some areas of family law ceased to have jurisdiction in the early 1920s. From 1918 women could have recourse to the Soviet instead of the *shariat* divorce law and between 1921-23, legislation was passed outlawing practices such as *kalym*, polygamy, child marriage and forced abduction with strict penalties for infringement. In 1925-9, land and water reforms gave women an independent entitlement to a share of these resources, emphasising their equality and autonomy in law and in society (Akiner, 1997). However, it was acknowledged that legal instruments alone would not be sufficient to bring about change in attitudes and practices, which were deeply ingrained and sanctioned by religion. Accordingly, in the mid-20s, a more proactive approach was adopted. Central Asian branches of the *Zhenotdel* (the women's section of the Party) began to conduct agitprop work to help indigenous women to take the initial step into social production and political participation. Different forms of activism were designed to reach different groups of women and take account of the specific characteristics and customs of different nationalities. For nomadic peoples, agitprop took the form of mobile clubs known as 'red tents', which stayed with an *aul* for two or three months before moving on to another. The first of these was set up in Kazakhstan in 1926. Their brief was to combat illiteracy, to provide medical, cultural and political education, as well information on the new civil and property rights, and to offer training and support to help women enter production and Party work (Buckley, 1989: 89-90).

In Central Asia, the latter took on particular resonance. There is little doubt that many activists were committed and sincere in their desire to liberate Muslim women (Buckley, ibid.: 86). However, Soviet ideology and policy on gender relations in Central Asia must also be seen in the light of wider objectives. Although women's liberation was a primary issue, more so than in European Russia, this was largely for political and economic reasons. The regime's failure to penetrate or destroy traditional associational networks through direct ass*aul*ts on local elites led to a new strategy, in which sex replaced social class as the decisive lever for effecting social change (Warshofsky Lapidus, 1978: 66). The new civil and property rights granted to women and enforced through the Soviet legal system were used to undermine traditional Muslim law and legal institutions and break their hold over local life. Women came to be viewed, in Massell's (1974) evocative term, as a 'surrogate proletariat'. Class relations had not developed sufficiently to provide a proletariat which could be mobilised to effect change, but women could be identified as the most exploited stratum of Muslim society. By mobilising women through the *Zhenotdel*, the Party could use them to gain access to the Muslim community, crystallise their discontent and channel it in new social and political directions. In this context, in Central Asia, the transformation of gender relations became the main catalyst for wider social change.

This instrumental use of women's emancipation entered a new and more aggressive phase in 1927, with the '*khudzhum*', an all-out attack on the old way of life, centred on mass unveiling of indigenous women. For the Russian development activists, the *parandzha* (veil) was a symbol of the oppression, ignorance and degradation in Central Asian societies which the Soviet state had pledged to eradicate. Unveiling was presented as an ideological victory and, for women and society as a whole, a rite of passage into a new era of progress and

enlightenment. Traditionally, Kazak women were not veiled, and the mass unveilings took place largely in Uzbekistan, where the custom was most entrenched. However, the principles of *khudzhum* were also relevant in Kazakstan. Here, as elsewhere in Central Asia, stepping up the destruction of traditional family structures through the mass mobilisation of women came to be seen as the key to undermining the traditional social order.

The effects of the *khudzhum* are described fully in Massell's account of the period. The aspect I wish to underline here is the contradictory results of this onslaught on traditional gender norms. On the one hand, the Soviet campaign for women's emancipation raised the position of women in society as an issue, challenged existing structures and stereotypes and opened spaces for women's participation in the new economic and political structures, which were certainly taken up by some women. However, the policy of making women a 'surrogate proletariat' misfired badly. As Akiner (1997) argues, since the Kazak economy, culture and social relations revolved around the kinship ideal, gender policies which attempted to cut across family solidarities were seen as an attack on every aspect of Kazak life. One direct result was that many Russian activists and indigenous women who had broken taboos were violently attacked or even murdered. Another was that gender relations and the private sphere of the family became a site of resistance to change imposed from the outside. In the face of the accelerated pace of Soviet modernisation, Central Asian women and men reacted by selectively accommodating to and resisting change, most significantly in the domestic sphere, where men and women colluded in holding on to the familiar order, including the disposition of gender roles. It is the process and results of this selective accommodation that I shall turn to in the next section.

III. The outcome of Soviet modernisation: stratification, selective accommodation and resistance to change.

To what extent were Soviet policies successful in transforming the traditional cultural and economic landscape in Kazakstan and what kind of social and economic stratification did they create? In particular, how were gender domains and the boundaries between public and domestic spheres changed by the Soviet development project?

By the 1970s, it was asserted that the peoples of Central Asia had 'successfully completed the non-capitalist road to development' (Margulan, 1967). The past 50 years were presented as a period of economic and social achievement and the popular image of Kazakstan, put forward in the didactic-propaganda material of the time, was that of 'A Storehouse of Natural Riches... of Great Transformations... A Republic of Major Industries... of Collective Farms and State Farms... A Land with a Great Future' (Yanios and Dvoskin, 1957)[64]. It was asserted that, in the Kazak countryside, 'new, all-Soviet and international features of daily life and culture' had 'emerged and developed under the leadership of Russian culture and in connection with the cultures of other peoples of the USSR' (Margulan, 1967: 7). The improved status of women in Central Asian societies, particularly in rural areas, was also presented as a marker of the overall progress achieved under the Soviet system. Quantitative

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[64] Yanios, N. and Dvoskin, B., *Besedy o Kazakhstane*, Alma-Ata, Kazgosizdat, cited in Akiner (1995): 51.

indicators showed that the position of women in the Kazak labour force had risen from 15% in 1922 to 47% in 1970, and that women made up 46% of all *kolkhoz* workers. It was asserted that, in the countryside, women now occupied leading and specialist positions on collective farms. They were using new technology alongside men. Bakeries, running water, electric irons and canteens had freed them from the burdensome tasks connected with the previous way of life and women's new economic independence had changed patriarchal and hierarchical relations within the family (Vasil'eva, 1975).

However, the picture painted in these ideologically inspired celebrations of Soviet-style modernization was not complete. Although presented as egalitarian, Soviet development was marked by disparities at all levels. At the macro level, at the beginning of the 1990s, various researchers concluded that Central Asia and Kazakstan represented a specific Soviet case of underdevelopment – in effect, the region's economies had remained at the periphery, almost completely outside the sphere of industrialisation in the union economy (Alexandrov, 1993; Patnaik, 1996). Soviet development policies had led to similar disparities between and within regions, particularly between urban and rural areas. By the Brezhnev era, a stable standard of living, grounded in state employment and welfare provision was a reality in rural as well as urban communities. However, in Kazakstan as elsewhere in the USSR, development indicators such as income levels and provision of health care and education were lower in rural areas (Patnaik, ibid: 74; UNDP, 1995: 3). Further, these disparities were linked to ethnicity, with the indigenous population overly represented in rural areas and Slavs concentrated in the cities. Through controlling the division of labour and the allocation of reward, the state also created its own forms of differentiation and social stratification[65]. In the countryside, waged labour for the state farm was a key determinant of access to resources and therefore of social stratification. Despite the ideological commitment to incorporating the indigenous population, particularly women, into public labour, both groups continued to be relatively marginalized and disadvantaged, occupying the least skilled and least remunerated positions in the rural workforce and formal hierarchy (Bridger, 1987; Lubin, 1984).

Similarly, state accounts of the outcome of modernisation glossed over the underside to official practice and ideology. As Ledeneva (1998) has argued in her study of Russia's 'economy of favours,' and as Cynthia Werner (1997(a)(b), 1998) has shown for Kazakstan in particular, the formal state system of public labour and distribution of resources was also intertwined with informal practices. The second economy and personal networks based on colleagues, friends and kin provided alternative forms of access to resources, values and identities. In effect, 'a large social network (...) could serve as a form of wealth or as a resource-base in itself' (Ledeneva, 1998: 113). In some instances, formal position in the occupational hierarchy corresponded with this informal 'wealth'. This was the case for the Soviet elite of party cadres and state officials, who had considerable access to and control over state property, which enabled them to build large social networks. However, other relatively lowly positions in the formal hierarchy were also valued highly in the informal 'economy of favours'. From the perspective of ethnicity, parts of the informal economy

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[65] For a detailed discussion on social stratification in Soviet society, see for example, Zaslavsky's 'From Redistribution to Marketization: Social and Attitudinal Change in Post-Soviet Russia' in Warshofsky Lapidus (ed.) (1995) *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation.*

'found a safe and comfortable niche in traditional networks of reciprocity (...) constituting a 'native regime of consumption' characteristic only for the local population' (Korotyeva and Makarova, 1997: 581). From a gender perspective, 'male' and 'female' occupations both provided diverse opportunities to engage in informal networking and exchanges. For instance, although they were low-paid, traditionally 'female' areas of employment, such as retail and services were particularly valuable arenas for social networking and *blat*[66]. Similarly, women's household responsibilities obliged them to develop the skills needed to create and maintain complex networks and systems for bartering goods, favours and information, in order to compensate for the constant difficulties in consumption and daily life. During at least the last decade of the Soviet regime, more and more citizens were turning to these private networks of advantage and survival to compensate for the inefficiencies and shortcomings of the public sector, shaping other aspects of social stratification in the process (Bruno, 1996: 60).

How were these patterns of stratification to be explained? To some extent, the problem of uneven development was recognised during the Soviet period. As Kandiyoti (1996) describes, the discourse on the achievements of Soviet-style modernization was undercut by a parallel and contradictory discourse, which stressed the immutability of Muslim cultures and the persistence of local patterns of social organisation that the Soviet state had been unable to penetrate and transform. The problems of development in Central Asia were singled out as illustrative of a particularly large 'attitudinal lag' between rates of technical progress and attitudinal change:

> If this (lack of correspondence) is characteristic for our society in general, then it is all the more noticeable in the republics of Central Asia, which in an economic sense in a relatively short historical period completed a leap unparalleled in scope... In the consciousness and behaviour of some parts of the population, traditions and survivals continue to be preserved which, by their character and content, are not compatible with the socio-economic level of the development of society. (M.F. Soldatov, *Trudovoe vospitanie mass*, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1972: 97-8, cited Lubin, 1984: 204).

Soviet ethnographers, now echoed by many of their post-Soviet colleagues, both from Russia and Central Asia, continued to point to manifold 'survivals' of the past, particularly in rural areas. They argued that, despite Soviet modernisation, the 'essence' of traditional culture had been retained unscathed and reproduced in an unbroken chain throughout the Soviet period. On the other hand, many Western researchers have pointed to the need for a less essentialist approach, which takes account of the actual dynamics of change, accommodation and resistance in Central Asia. According to this argument, which is convincingly summarised by Kandiyoti (1996), what appears to some commentators as 'traditionalism' was as much a response to and creation of the system itself as an unchanging feature of local communities. Drawing on anthropological work carried out in the late Soviet period, such as Humphrey's (1998 [1983]) study of Karl Marx Collective in Siberia, Dragadze's (1988) work on rural families in Georgia and Bouchet's (1991) study of tribalism in the Central Asian kolkhoz, she explores the ways in which the social, cultural and economic landscape of Soviet Central

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[66] In her in-depth study, Ledenova defines *blat* as: 'the use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures'.

Asia was created through the interplay of local strategies and identities and the state-imposed development concept. Her discussion and my own reading of these and other critiques informs the final section of this chapter on the topography of my research communities at the beginning of the current reforms.

1V. Profiles of the research communities

On one level, the Lenin, Druzhba and Sarybulak communities typified the history and structure of state farms in Kazakstan[67]. They were all sited on former Kazak pasture lands and established as state farms from the amalgamation or re-demarcation of earlier collective farms, in 1946, 1961 and 1960, respectively.

As will be further explored in Chapter 4, they were all incorporated in the Union-wide state-controlled input, production, distribution and marketing chains. At the top, the all-union body, the *Gosagroprom SSSR* took strategic decisions on the development of agriculture and the agricultural processing industries. At the Republic and *Oblast* levels, Ministries and Committees were responsible for ensuring that agricultural production met plan targets and coordinating processing and storage. At *Rayon* level, the *RAPO (rayonnoe agropromyshlenoe ob'edinenie*) was the first link in the management system of individual enterprises, providing data for planning and organising processing and storage[68]. This highly centralised system curtailed the freedom of individual farms and farm managers to determine agricultural production. What was grown, how much was produced and where it was processed or sold was determined at the centre rather than at the micro level. For example, on the Lenin state farm, an order of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kazak SSR, issued in 1984, stipulated that the enterprise would specialise in meat production, with a subsidiary focus on cereals. In application of this order, a long-term Production Plan was drawn up by the oblast administration in 1986[69]. This assessed the farm's current situation and potential production up to 1992, based on factors such climate and soil conditions, the available workforce and projected developments in the use of technology, and set precise targets for increases in production, together with developments in infrastructure and services.

As well as being situated within the same vertical system of planning and production, all three state farms had a similar hierarchical internal structure, which was expressed in the

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[67] The fact that I investigated privatisation on two former *sovkhozy* rather than *kolkhozy* needs to be flagged. State farms were statistically more representative of the situation in Kazakstan as a whole and were the focus of the privatisation programme. It appeared that there was little to distinguish the two in terms of organisation, management and marketing arrangements (Coulter, 1996). However, in terms of social structure and cultural continuities, a number of informants suggested that *kolkhozy* had been based on Kazak lineages or *auls* and tended to be far more homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and kinship. My own comparison between the relatively ethnically homogeneous Sarybulak community and the other two state farms suggests that this may well have impacted on the privatisation process and the question merits further attention.

[68] For a detailed description of the functioning of the Agriculture Sector see for example, Khozraschet i samoupravlenie v trudovykh kollekivakh kolkhozov i sovkhozov. Uchebnik posobie dlya kolkhoznikov i pabochikh sovkhozov. Profizdat. Moskva, 1988.

[69] *Proekt vnutrikhozyaistvennogo zemleustroistva sovkhoza Lenina Molodezhnogo Rayona Karagandinskoi oblasti, 1986, Gosudarstvennyi Agropromyshlennyi Komitet Kazakhskoi SSR, Karagandinskii filial proektnogo instituta 'Kazgiprozem'.* Document held in the *oblast* records.

organisation of decision-making and production. The top level of this 'three-tier' system was the farm's central administration (*tsentral'noye upravleniye*), which was located in the central or biggest population centre. The next level comprised the various production departments (*otdeleniye*), structured around smaller population centres, where work was organised in particular branches of agricultural production. On the Lenin state farm, there were four such *otdeleniye*, two focusing primarily on livestock production and two on arable production. The lowest tier of the administration and production comprised the individual 'brigades' or 'production units', which actually performed the agricultural work. Again, these were usually structured around particular locations, such as areas of agricultural or pasture land or buildings, such as the dairy, bakery or mechanical repairs workshop and focused on specific tasks. For example, on sovkhoz Lenin's fourth *otdeleniye*, one brigade focused on preparation of feed for livestock, another on actual feeding of livestock and a third on milking.. On Lenin and Sarybulak, some of these brigades, notably those focusing on sheep herding, were based in outlying *fermy,* far from the *sovkhoz* centre (see figure 2.1, facing page).

Within this structure, individual jobs were also incorporated in the vertical hierarchy. On Lenin, respondents tended to distinguish between four different categories: 1) the farm director; 2) the chief specialists, (such as the head economist, head accountant and livestock specialist); 3) the 'white-collar workers' (*sluzhashchie*) (including the heads of the individual *otdeleniye*, brigadiers, farm office administrators and managers of units such as the dairy or grain store); and 4) ordinary 'blue-collar workers', further subdivided into skilled and general workers and permanent, seasonal or day-hire workers.

The most powerful figure was the farm director, whose job was concerned with both production and administration[70]. As Humphrey (1998: 122) describes, 'he (sic)[71] [was] responsible for work discipline, issuing permits for travel, sick-leave, insurance and pensions, taking on and dismissing workers, and the honesty and quality of their work, as well as the directly productive activities of allotting products and money to different funds, obtaining inputs, fulfilling the plan of deliveries to the state, allocating machinery and workers to the brigades and so on'. A state farm director therefore had very extensive powers in relation to ordinary members of the enterprise. However, all three of the fieldwork communities bore witness to the changes which had taken place since the Stalinist period, when these powers could in some instances be almost unlimited and used in an arbitrary and unaccountable way (Humphrey, 1998: 123). In the formal decision-making structure of state farms, the highest authority was not the Director but the general meeting of the *sovkhoz* members (*Obshchee sobranie trudovogo kollektiva*).

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[70] It should also be pointed out that during the Soviet period, the *sovkhoz* proper was also articulated with the local organ of the Communist Party (*Partorg*), headed by a Party Secretary and the Rural Soviet (*Sel'sovet*) headed by a Chairman. For a detailed exploration of the relationship between these three organs see, for example, Humphrey's analysis of the Selenga collective farm (1998: Chapter 3).

[71] None of the three former state farms had ever had a woman director. More widely, there was one well-known woman state farm director in the Lenin region at the time of privatisation, but she was seen as an unusual exception. The discussion in Chapter 5 examines the issue of gender and managerial authority in more detail.

Figure 2.1: Administrative and Production Structure of Sovkhoz Lenin during the late Soviet Period

Central Village

KONTORA (Farm Administration Office):

Director's office	Chief specialists	Accountancy Department	Communications	
Human Resources	Library	Village Council (Sel'sovet)	Trade Union	
Women's Committee				

OTHER SECTIONS

Dairy	Bakery	Product store	Grainstore	Generator
Petrol station Department	Repair Shop	Garage	Water and Roads	
Construction Dept store	Canteen	Village hall	Hotel	Machinery
School	Hospital	Post	ATS-Telecommunications	
Kindergarten	4 shops (foods, general store)		Dom Byta (sewing services etc)	
Chemist	Club/culture centre	Banya	Vegetable garden	

Otdeleniye 1
Otdeleniye office
(arable production brigades)

Otdeleniye 2
Otdeleniye office
(arable production brigades)

Otdeleniye 3
Otdeleniye office
(livestock production (meat), some arable production brigades)

Otdeleniye 4 *(bordering on central village)*
Otdeleniye office
(livestock production (dairy), milking parlour, some arable production brigades)

This meeting met at least four times a year and elected a governing committee (*Sovet trudovogo kollektiva*) which had authority when the general meeting was not in session. Formally, then, the State Farm Director was the third authority after the general meeting and the governing committee. This whole structure i.e. 1) meeting; 2) committee and 3) leader was theoretically repeated at the lower levels of *otdeleniye* and brigades. However, as Humphrey (ibid: 105) points out, in practice this principle of 'worker democracy' was in contradiction with the principle of 'single leader' (*yedinonachanliye*), whereby the decisions of individual officials along the chain of command took precedence. As in her examples from Siberia, I found that the meetings and committees operated only infrequently, if at all, at lower levels. On Lenin, for instance, the brigade committees met only at key times for production, such as sowing and pre- and post-harvest. In the final instance, then, the actual powers of state farm workers to decide important matters were limited. Nonetheless, looking back to the late-Soviet period in contrast to the present, respondents often referred to their sense that there were channels for expressing complaints about unfair treatment by the Director or other farm officials, both within the farm, notably through the trade union representative, or beyond it, for example through higher echelons of the Party apparatus or the press, and their confidence that there would be some form of redress.

Below the farm director, responsibility for organising the practicalities of agricultural production fell to the chief specialists and heads of *otdeleniye.* Since the 1970s, agricultural production had been structured into specific sectors, headed by chief specialists. On Lenin, for example, the livestock sector was headed by a chief 'zootechnik' (livestock specialist) and chief veterinarian, the arable sector by a chief economist and head engineer and the planning and accounting sector by a chief economist and head accountant. The relationship between the specialists from the farm centre and the heads of the *otdeleniye* appeared to be a complex one in terms of power and influence over decision-making. In theory, the heads of the *otdeleniye* were subordinate to the chief specialists. In practice, the heads of the *otdeleniye* tended to be local people, often older than the specialists who were 'outsiders' appointed by the state and this appeared to have had an influence on their relative positions. For ordinary workers, it was the head of the *otdeleniye* who was responsible for deciding key issues, such as which workers would join which brigade and what their annual production plan would be.

For ordinary workers, jobs were divided into different specialisations (combine operator, shepherd, milk-maid, field-worker, accountant), which, as will be discussed further below, required different kinds of training and had different pay, ideologies, statuses and political opportunities associated with them. Within this centralised and hierarchical system, individual farm workers had little opportunity to change or control the conditions in which they worked. From the 1980s, there were moves to change this situation. Faced with the failure to meet growth potential in agriculture and a series of environmental problems, the Soviet government saw a need to stimulate economic activism and the independence and creativity of work collectives and encouraged a transition from 'the extremely centralised, command system of management to a democratic system, prioritising the economic, with an optimum balance of centralism and self-governance'[72]. Two major changes were 1) wider introduction of *khozraschet* (self-accounting), whereby rather than simply fulfilling

[72] From *Khozraschet i samoupravleniye*, Profizdat, Moscow 1985, p. 4.

production plans, farms and the smaller units within them were to aim to ensure a profit balance and 2) the decision to move towards greater independence for smaller units, including the creation of family brigades (*semeinyi podrad*). This was one important area of contrast between the three research communities. In particular, the family brigade system had made far greater inroads on Sarybulak and on Druzhba than on Lenin, where no brigades had gone over to this system.

At another level, the communities had significantly different profiles, in terms of their farming systems and incorporation into the Soviet development project. These emerged as important points of comparison in analysing the gender outcome of the current reform, as did the demographic composition of the communities, which is also described in this section[73]. Changing patterns of migration are mentioned specifically as a background to the analysis in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Farming systems

One significant factor in shaping the post-privatisation landscape was the different farming systems that existed prior to restructuring, each of which had a different gender distribution of labour. The Lenin and Sarybulak state farms were both situated in relatively isolated and uninhabited areas of un-irrigated steppe most suitable for livestock production. Historically, both had concentrated on extensive, semi-transhumant pastoralism. However, the communities' farming systems had diverged sharply since collectivisation. Sarybulak was located in a particularly arid region known as the 'hungry steppe' and had not been the target of specific Soviet rural development or industrialisation drives or the accompanying in-migration of Slavs or other nationalities. The community had remained relatively demographically and economically homogeneous, essentially comprising Kazaks from a restricted number of lineages and concentrating on semi-transhumant herding. The system described by the older generation of informants who had worked on *sovkhoz* Lenin before the 1950s seemed very similar to that still practised on Sarybulak. Herding brigades were often based on family units and their work followed a pattern of seasonal migration, often taking place in isolated encampments far from the centre. In this system, both men and women were employed as shepherds or herders, usually as senior and assistant, respectively. In the community as a whole, shepherds and their work were highly regarded, both for their knowledge of land and animals and their self-reliance and autonomy.

Unlike the 'hungry steppe', the area around *sovkhoz* Lenin had been the target of both rural development and industrialisation drives. From the Tsarist period, industrialists had begun to exploit the region's rich coal resources and Slav settlers had been attracted by the possibilities for settled agriculture. Both trends had developed further during the Soviet period. On *sovkhoz* Lenin, the farming system and demography had undergone considerable changes since the Virgin Lands campaign in the 1950s, which had seen a mass influx of Slavs and the development of more intensive agriculture[74]. By the 1990s, only a minority of

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[73] Statistics on the communities' demographic profiles are set out in Appendix 1.

[74] 'In the 1950s and 1960s, more than one million Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians came to Kazakstan as pioneers in the development of the Virgin Lands. The proportion of Kazaks, which in 1926 was 57.1% of the total population of Kazakstan, fell to 38% in 1939; and by 1959 was less than

workers from the Kazak-dominated *otdeleniye* continued to take livestock out to the seasonal pastures and a handful of families lived year-round on the distant fermy. Stock rearing had become increasingly specialised and intensive, with a shift from sheep and horses to cattle and a focus on dairy production and fattening young animals from other farms. In addition, under the Virgin Lands campaign, the farm had developed a second line of production in cereal cultivation. This shift was accompanied by a profound change in work relations, including the gender division of agricultural labour. Although women still worked with livestock, particularly with the calves and in the dairy, transhumant herding was increasingly conducted by men alone. In addition, although many Slav women had come to the community in the 1950s specifically to work as tractor drivers and machine operators, by the 1990s, this branch of mechanised production was almost entirely conducted by men. This reflected a generational shift in aspirations, with younger women tending to seek more specialised education and employment in the service sector as nurses, teachers or administrators. In 1994, 113 of the farm's 583 workers were women, but only 15 worked in cereal production, against 60 in livestock production, with the remainder in administration. On the other hand, women predominated in the service sector, in the kindergarten, school, hospital, shops, post office and hotel. In terms of vertical stratification, the Director, seven of the eight chief specialists and the four heads of the *otdelenie* were men, along with eleven of the next level of white-collar employees (*sluzhashchie*). It seemed that the farm director had traditionally been Kazak, but that, before the outmigration of many ethnic Germans and Russians began in 1991, the latter had dominated the specialist and managerial posts in the *sovkhoz* centre.

The situation of *sovkhoz* Druzhba was somewhat different. Although it too had been sited on traditional Kazak grazing lands and originally focused on livestock production, its situation in the lee of the Zailiiskiy Alatau mountain range provided considerable possibilities for irrigated cultivation. The region had already been in the forefront of the Tsarist colonial expansion, which had led to significant in-migration of Slav peasant settlers and disruption of the indigenous economy. During the Soviet era, the community's location near Almaty also led to increasing diversification, both in terms of heterogeneity of population and economic activity, with the state farm existing alongside the railway, rural manufacturing and agro-industry. Sixteen large firms were located in the community, together with the largest animal feed (*kombikorm*) plant in the Republic, which employed around 600 people. By the early 1990s, much of the original pasture land was under cultivation and the farm had come to specialise in dairy production, cereals and horticulture. All three branches were represented in each of the outlying villages, apart from one which specialised exclusively in the cultivation of fruit and potatoes. Frustratingly, the official statistics on women's and men's participation in agricultural production prior to privatisation had disappeared along with the *sovkhoz* itself before I started my fieldwork. According to the administrator responsible for keeping the books on human resources, in 1991, 600 of the 1,100 workers had been women and in 1985 women had comprised 60% of workers. She also indicated that

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30%. Only in the mid-1960s, due to a high level of natural growth of the Kazak population, as well as to an increase since the mid-1980s in the level of emigration of the non-Kazak population, has there been a gradual increase in the proportion of Kazaks in the overall population of the Republic. According to the 1989 census it had reached 41%' (UNDP, 1995).

women dominated particular branches, particularly sheep, dairy, livestock and horticulture and that in these branches many team leaders were women. On the other hand, very few women worked at the higher levels as brigade leaders and none in the highest echelons of the administration in specialist and managerial posts. Although these figures may not be entirely accurate, my respondents' work histories demonstrated that women had been heavily involved in all branches of agriculture, except for mechanised cereal production, which, as on Lenin, was dominated by men. The farm's workforce had also been stratified by ethnicity, with the various *otdeleniye* and the associated specialisations dominated by particular ethnic groups – for example, Kazaks predominantly in livestock production and Turks in horticulture. This group was commonly perceived to be particularly 'marginal'. In particular, women's work in horticulture was seasonal, and it was common for this group to be heavily engaged in household production of produce for sale at the local markets. In general, many households sold produce at the market and second-economy activity was highly developed.

It should be flagged that on Lenin and Druzhba, changing patterns of in- and out-migration were particularly significant factors not only historically, but also in connection with the current reforms. On the one hand, throughout the early and mid-1990s, both communities experienced significant out-migration of ethnic Russians and Germans, often the most skilled, white-collar workers, who took up new opportunities to emigrate to Russia or Germany. On the other hand, there was a counter-trend towards in-migration of ethnic Kazaks from the diaspora. On Lenin, this comprised 10 Kazak households from Mongolia, who were resettled in one of the *otdeleniye*. On Druzhba, far larger numbers were involved. Between 1991 and 1997, 197 Kazak families, mainly from Karakalpakistan, were resettled across the community. In addition, the community also absorbed considerable numbers of Kazak in-migrants from the ecologically devastated areas of Semipalatinsk and Kyzyl Orda within Kazakstan itself. On Druzhba the trend towards in-migration seemed set to continue. According to statistics from the local *Akimiat*, a further 103 households, comprising 353 Kazaks, 21 Russians, 7 Germans and 14 other in-migrants from other ethnic groups, including Uighurs, Turks, Azeris and Estonians, arrived between January and September 1998, when I left the field[75]. In both communities, the new arrivals were a focus for often heated debates around opportunity, entitlement and distribution of scarce resources as well as around 'tradition' and identity. Gender and notably the 'proper' roles for women in work and family, how they had been changed by Soviet policy and how they should now evolve, was a key issue in these debates.

Incorporation into the Soviet development project

The three communities, as well as different social categories within them, therefore occupied different niches in the Soviet economy. One way of conceptualising this interrelationship is

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[75] Detailed statistical tables showing in and out-migration on Druzhba are set out in Appendix 1. These three different trends in migration: emigration of non-Kazaks, immigration of Kazaks and refugees and internal migration, were marked across the country as a whole. In 1994 alone, about 480,839 people left the country, around 70,000 migrated into the country and 330,000 migrated inside the country. 283,000 Russians, 92,000 Germans, 37,000 Ukrainian and others left. Around 310,000 (93.7%) of migrants inside the country were Kazaks who moved mainly from rural *auls* to the cities (Nazpary, 2002: 31, citing Masanov, 1996, *Ethnopoliticheskii Monitoring v Kazakstane*, Almaty: Tsentr Monitoringa Mezhnoetnicheskikh otnoshenii v Kazakstan, p. 2).

to say that some communities and social categories were more 'state-dependent' than others, which, either because of their relative power, or paradoxically because of their marginalisation, had developed a range of other niches and strategies within the socialist economy (Zaslavsky, 1995). From this perspective, the Lenin community was the most 'state dependent' of the three, with Druzhba's relative incorporation into the Soviet modernisation project and Sarybulak's relative marginalisation from it, opening alternative possibilities:

<u>*Sarybulak*</u>

- *isolated and relatively marginalised from Soviet modernisation project;*
- *value ascribed to self-provisioning and autonomy;*
- *pastoralist farming system maintained and highly valued across the community;*
- *relative ethnic and economic homogeneity;*
- *kin-based forms of labour, social organisation and ritual important in both public and private spheres;*

<u>*Lenin*</u>

- *relatively integrated into the Soviet modernisation project;*
- *reliance on the state for services and standard of living;*
- *uneasy balance or symbiosis between indigenous and state identities, forms of social and work organisation and ritual.*
- *strong inter-ethnic community identity;*
- *interdependence of households and the state farm (i.e. symbiotic relationship between subsidiary and state farming;*
- *value of autonomy and self-provisioning, second economy activity not very developed.*

<u>*Druzhba*</u>

- *most integrated into Soviet modernisation project;*
- *ethnically and economically very heterogeneous;*
- *relatively weak community-wide identity, strong identity of sub-communities, i.e.* otdelenie, *brigades, social networks;*
- *highly developed second economy.*

Figure 2.2: Key characteristics of the Sarybulak, Lenin and Druzhba state farms

Looking in detail at the Lenin state farm, I argue that gender and ethnicity were key factors around which communities' relationship to the state development project was articulated.

Revisiting sovkhoz Lenin

If we returned to *sovkhoz* Lenin, it would not take us very long to understand that its seemingly uniform Soviet topography hid alternative community topographies, shaped by the encounter and accommodation between Soviet development policy and the pastoral culture and economy it aimed to transform – and between incoming Slav settlers and the indigenous Kazak population. We would also see how these topographies were informed by ethnicity, generation and gender. If we stood at the entrance to the main village at sunset, when the

sheep and cattle are driven from pasture, and asked each of the waiting villagers for a map to guide us through the community, we would receive many different configurations of the same physical and social landscape, which would differ both from the 'official' map and from each other.

If we spoke first to a Kazak villager, he or she would probably begin by telling us that we were in a 'Kazak' *sovkhoz*, unlike the neighbouring community, which was 'Russian', and that this was important. It meant that Kazak and Muslim traditions and customs were respected. That livestock were central to both *sovkhoz* and household production and, so long as they were plentiful, the community would survive. That it was important to help kin and clansmen, to stick together in times of trouble. That everyone in the *sovkhoz* was related. And that younger members of the family should respect their elders and wives their husbands, as the *khozyain* (master) of the household. If we took up the villager's certain invitation to stop by and 'drink tea' – since hospitality is a central part of Kazak identity and tradition – we would be shown through to the back room of the house, the 'best' room, with its displays of good china, felt rugs and photographs of relatives and invited to sit down, cross-legged on the floor, at a low round table. The woman of the house, or her daughter-in-law, would pour numerous cups of milky tea and serve copious amounts of food, especially meat. Perhaps one of the household's private flock of sheep would be slaughtered in our honour, and prepared as '*besbarmak*', with parts of the head distributed, according to age and gender, to the invited guests, the foreign researchers, but also nearby kin, perhaps neighbours and work colleagues too. They would tell us that community life was punctuated by 'feasts' of this kind, sometimes small, sometimes larger events to which the 'whole neighbourhood' or 'whole *sovkhoz*' would be invited. We might discover that the household comprised an elderly couple and the family of their youngest son, and that the other sons lived separately, but nearby. The old people, now retired, would talk about their work and lives as herders, out on the steppe encampments; the younger generation about their further education and work in mechanised agriculture, the hospital or school. The daughter-in-law might take us to one side and recount how she had had to leave her job in the city when she got married, to come and live with her husband's family[76]. It was traditional, but hard; she was expected to be demure and modest, and to obey her in-laws and husband. But then, if the husband was the head, the wife was the neck, and when the neck turned the head must too. And now she had had a child, she had gone back to work, as an accountant, in a 'women's collective' where she could relax and let her hair down. The family photograph albums would be produced and we would learn, not only about an extended network of kin, in the *sovkhoz* centre and outlying settlements, in the rayon centre and perhaps as far away as Almaty, but also about the clan or lineage, which can be traced back seven generations, and its close relationship to this land, which their ancestors had known and migrated across for generations. However, whilst our hosts might stress their ancestry, they would also show pride in 'their' *sovkhoz* and the improvements it had brought – the school, hospital, kindergarten and cultural centre - and the distance they had travelled from the 'primitive' nomadic way of life.

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[76] Despite the prohibition of this custom under Soviet law, it was not uncommon, particularly in the older generations, to find that women had been 'stolen' into marriage against their will. See Werner (2004) for a recent study of non-consensual bride-kidnapping in Kazakstan.

If we then fell in with a Russian villager, and made the same request, we would be given a rather different map of the community. He or she might say that, although the outlying settlements were Kazak, the central village was dominated by Russians and Germans. It was they, the specialists and administrators, who had been the driving force behind the building of the *sovkhoz*. With pride, he or she might tell us that many Russians had come as volunteers, during the Virgin Lands Campaign in the 1950s, to bring civilisation to the empty steppe. Both men and women had worked as tractor and combine operators; they had worked hard to create 'something out of nothing', had built all this, with their own hands. The Kazaks, on the other hand, were lazy and did not know how to work. You could tell by looking at the houses – that one, on the left, was a Russian house – look at its neat and well-tended vegetable plot; but that one, next door, was a Kazak house – lots of livestock, and the garden in a mess. And Kazak women had never worked – they had been listed as assistant shepherds, but they just had children. How could you work when you had a family of ten to take care of? However, we would also find that, like the members of the Kazak household, the Russians would point with pride to their own domestic smallholding, especially the vegetable plot and the latest litter of pigs, and tell us that the latter had been sold to buy the new television which had pride of place in the living room. If we accepted the invitation to 'drink tea', we would be served copious amounts of vodka and either salads fresh from the garden or home-made pickles. As in the Kazak household, the family photograph albums would be produced. Unlike it, many family members would live far away, perhaps in Siberia, where the wages were good, or in Russia or the Ukraine, but like it, our hosts would stress the closeness of their relations with neighbours and work colleagues.

What can these maps tell us about the landscape of *sovkhoz* Lenin? In terms of (dis)continuities and the maintenance of past (local) practices, two things are particularly striking: first, the extent to which actual economic and social practice deviated from the official Soviet model; and, second, the extent to which it continued to be influenced by culture and ethnicity. As described above, one of the aims of Soviet modernisation was to rearticulate the relationship between public and domestic life. The state farm had created a division between public and private domains, work and family, splitting indigenous kin-based structures where life, work and economy were one. Value officially came from membership in the public domain, from labour in the socialised economy and one's contribution to the collective. However, these maps reveal that local life also continued to be centred on the private sphere of kinship and the home, coming of age through marriage, founding a family, running a household and building solid networks of reciprocity. The domestic sphere therefore played a vital part in people's lives, both as a site of alternative identities and solidarities and, to varying degrees, of alternative income-generating activities.

In fact, throughout the Soviet period, the majority of households in all my fieldwork communities kept a domestic smallholding (*pod'sobnoye khozyaistvo*), which produced food both for domestic consumption and for sale and exchange. The continued existence of this form of household production can be read in various ways. By the end of the Soviet period, when rural salaries were stable and regular, maintaining a smallholding was a potentially lucrative activity, which could produce a surplus for sale and conversion into luxury goods such as a television or washing machine. As such, it was part of the 'shadow' or 'second economy' which came into being alongside the official economy and compensated for or

took advantage of its shortcomings (Humphrey, 1995). On the one hand, then, the smallholding can be read in terms of a more generalised 'privatisation' of labour, as households drew their energies away from work for the collective to a more individualistic or 'capitalist' logic of utility and economic rationality (Lampland, 1995). In this sense, as Pine (1999) argues, the socialist state unintentionally reinforced the economic role of the household as the centre of the second economy. However, the precise relationship between state, household and second economy varied. On Lenin, most private livestock was sold through the state farm rather than directly on local markets. Respondents would contrast this with the 'uncivilised' or 'backward' (*dikii*) practices of 'other' communities in 'the South', where people had sold excess produce for money. In contrast, although there was similar disdain for certain ethnic groups, particularly the Turks and Uighurs, who were perceived to focus overly on second economy production, in practice many households sold home produce on the weekly market.

However, this economic rationale is not an adequate reading of the meaning of domestic production in any of my research communities. Equally striking was the way in which maintaining a smallholding was perceived as a key part of one's cultural and ethnic identity and the role it played in underpinning indigenous forms of community and solidarity. For my Kazak respondents, keeping livestock was presented as an integral part of 'being a Kazak', whilst for Russian respondents, a thriving and tidy vegetable plot was morally symbolic of effort and hard work. In addition, home-produced produce and livestock were one of the vital components, along with exchanges of labour and services, in maintaining the social networks in which households were embedded. These networks served a threefold purpose: to access scarce goods and services, to provide an alternative source of 'belonging' and status to membership of the *sovkhoz* and to provide a kind of 'safety net' in times of trouble. As Cynthia Werner describes in her study of household network strategies in a village in Southern Kazakstan, through the reciprocal exchange of gifts, favours and hospitality with kin, neighbours, schoolmates, work colleagues, friends, and also, in the Kazak case, clan members, households entered a web of reciprocal exchange and 'mutual indebtedness' which provided a form of insurance, both for individuals and households (1998: 601).

For Kazak households, in particular, the livestock kept in the domestic smallholding was central to the traditional hospitality and elaborate system of feasts that were the basis for other forms of reciprocal exchange. Not only weddings, but also other life cycle events, such as a circumcision, death and the commemoration of forty days and a year after a death (*pominki*) involved huge feasts, to which hundreds of people might be invited, and a series of other occasions, such as the Winter slaughter of a horse (*sogym*) and a child's first day at school, were also marked by smaller feasts and exchanges of gifts. All these occasions involved a huge investment of time and labour and considerable expense. As Cynthia Werner points out, behind the seeming economic irrationality of this behaviour, by providing opportunities to exchange food, labour, gifts and toasts, the feasts were the principle social institution through which Kazak households maintained and extended their social networks, which were manipulated daily for various economic and political purposes' (1997: 5). Feasting and gift exchange were, according to her argument, the particular 'Central Asian' form of the Soviet-era practice of using personal connections (*blat*) in a variety of contexts,

such as to obtain consumer goods, housing, a job, career advancement, university entrance and quality health care.

In this sense, again, indigenous practices grounded in understandings of kinship and community had fused with Soviet practices in particular ways. Werner describes feasting primarily with relation to Kazak households. What was particularly striking about former *sovkhoz* Lenin, and what distinguished it from the neighbouring communities and from Druzhba, was that the 'whole *sovkhoz*', Russian as well as Kazak households, was often included in feasts. In effect, on Lenin, feasts were a visible sign of the community wide, interethnic identity based on an interweaving of membership of the *sovkhoz* and the ritual economy. In this sense, Soviet structures were, in some circumstances, conceptualised through local models, in this case a kinship-based model of 'everybody being related' or 'being one *sovkhoz* or one *aul*'[77]

At the same time, there were divisions, tensions and obvious or latent inequalities both within and between Soviet and local models of the community. In particular, within this accommodation, ethnicity and gender were important markers of identity and arenas of negotiation and contestation. The different ways in which various groups were incorporated in the *sovkhoz* and moral economies had a socio-spatial expression. The *sovkhoz* bore little resemblance either to a farm or a village as this might be understood in the West. In fact, it comprised a number of different sub-communities. The central village (*tsentral'naya usad'ba*), the focus of the administrative, social and cultural infrastructure and of the Slav population, was often contrasted with the outlying settlements and herding encampments (*otdeleniye* and *otara*), overwhelmingly populated by Kazaks. These physical spaces were conceptualised as the lodestones of the Soviet and indigenous discourses and practice. In the Soviet discourse, the central village was presented as the vanguard of progress and modernity, with the *otdeleniye* and *otara* seen as increasingly 'traditional' and 'backward'[78]. However, in the alternative local Kazak discourse, value was reversed, with the *aul* seen as the positive centre of Kazak tradition and solidarity.

V. The Rural Gender Contract

In demarcating public and private domains, Soviet development also changed the contexts and meanings of women and men's labour. The Kazak way of life in general and women's tasks in particular, were classed as reproductive rather than productive and of less value. However, seen from the inside, the private sphere and women's identity as keepers of the hearth flame, with its associations of warmth, nurturing and hospitality, were construed as the heart of the moral order and Kazak identity. The underlying tensions within and between these two codes were largely mediated, often uneasily, by individuals, who combined these different regimes of value, using different idioms at different times and in different settings. Spatially, central Kazakstan was juxtaposed to southern Kazakstan, rural communities to urban ones, the *sovkhoz* centre to its outlying villages and public space to private space.

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[77] Caroline Humphrey (1998) describes a similar interrelationship between local models and Soviet structures in rural Buyatiya.

[78] In this discourse, the term *sovkhoz* was often used to refer to the central village and the term *aul* to the outlying ones.

Relationally, different stages of the life cycle, with the opportunities and responsibilities attendant on age and seniority, also brought different emphases. Both for Kazaks and for women generally, access to the public sector was problematic. For Kazak women, in particular, participation in public labour, valued in the Soviet code but suspect in the local one, had to be continually renegotiated, particularly at key points in the lifecycle, such as marriage and childbearing. Conversely, the value of their role in the family and domestic sphere had continually to be defended against its marginalisation or denigration in the official model.

Leo Howe (1998) evokes the mechanism by which subordinate groups relocate negative representations onto others in order to justify their own situation. In this sense, Russian women, also confronted with the ambiguities of the double or triple burden that was the lot of all rural women under socialism, could point to their Kazak counterparts, who 'didn't work' to bolster their own position within the official hierarchy of value. In turn, Kazak women often pointed to women from other groups as being less incorporated than themselves. At the time of my fieldwork the 'other' group so named was the incoming Kazak migrants from Mongolia, who were criticised as 'backward' because they lived in yurts and did not know how do housework. Kazak women also commonly pointed to Russian women's behaviour (drinking, smoking, sex) as a sign that they were morally beyond the pale.

Out of the combination of these two different codes came a shared consensus on the 'ideal' gender roles within rural households and the 'ideal' balance of work in public and domestic domains. Respondents were emphatic that this balance of work and roles was specific to the countryside, where households required the labour of both men and women to survive and prosper and that the balance would not necessarily be the same in the town or city, where tasks and responsibilities were different. I have therefore chosen to term this consensus, the 'rural gender contract'. I should clarify that, by using the term 'contract' I do not mean to suggest a codified and immutable agreement, but a relationship closer to Kandiyoti's (1998) concept of the local 'rules of the game' in gender relations, which may be subject to change and redefinition through a process of bargaining, but are a relatively enduring framework for human transactions.

According to this local narrative, a husband's role was to be *'glava sem'i'* (head of the family), to '*obespechit*" (provide), to *'kormit' semyu'* (feed the family), to '*dostat*' (obtain goods), and to '*dogovorit*'' (do deals in pursuit of the latter); a wife's role, on the other hand was to *'kontrolirovat' sebe'* (be self-controlled) and to *'byt' zhenshchinoi'* (be a woman) which entailed being the 'guardian of the hearth', managing the domestic sphere of childcare, cooking, cleaning, gardening and looking after some aspects of the smallholding (milking, caring for young animals and poultry, feeding the livestock) as well as managing the 'public' face of the household. A key contrast here is the difference between the male role of 'feeding the family', in the sense of materially and financially providing for the family's needs, and the female role of 'feeding the family' in the sense of growing food, raising livestock and producing meals. Although this was presented as a partnership - running the household was conceived as a common enterprise, with separate, but complementary roles for husband and wife and different roles for children according to age - the 'mainstay' of the household was

managing relationships and ritual obligations with kin, neighbourhood and community. To draw a parallel with the situation described by Ingrid Rudie (1994: 151), women's as well as men's activities were also considered as managing the 'public' face of the household. Marriage turned a woman into adult and wife and gave her a role in local ceremonial life, the 'arena where women cooperate, exchange services, create and maintain local network ties' which was 'a substantial portion of women's public space.' Just as 'inside' work, was not solely construed in terms of domestic labour, motherhood or caring for a family, 'outside' work was not solely constructed in terms of bringing in a wage[82] . In this cohort, both men and women therefore continued to perform tasks according to the traditional gender division of labour within the Soviet system. However, the value of these activities did not remain unchanged. In particular, for Kazaks, women's 'inside' locus became laden with symbolic associations with maintaining tradition and ethnic identity as the home became a haven from the Soviet state. Conversely, men's 'outside' locus became laden with associations with material and financial security and status in official society. This shift applied to all ethnic groups across the community.

The next cohort of informants, now parents and heads of households in their own right, were born between 1945 and 1965 and came of age during the late socialist period, which saw further shifts in official and folk models of labour and value and in gender domains. For this generation of Kazaks, encouraged both by the Soviet system and often by their parents, there were now in effect two possible courses into adult and public life for both men and women: marriage and further education and employment. This had a significant impact on the 'rural gender contract' as espoused by their parents' generation. In particular, increasing numbers of Kazak women were drawn into further education and into the workforce. Unlike in the previous generation, it was common for girls to leave home to study in local institutes or farther afield in Karaganda or Almaty, most often in administration, teaching or medicine, and to then be assigned work, sometimes far from their communities. Women were therefore acquiring a more public role in their own right before marriage and identifying with the Soviet valuation of productive work. As the following ethnographic example shows, the Soviet distinction between productive and unproductive, waged and unwaged labour had begun to displace local ideas of value, with domestic labour increasingly coming to seen as invisible and unvalued work:

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[82] In her study of different cohorts of women in China, Lisa Rofel (1999: 229) makes the point that women of the oldest cohort often lived away from their own mothers for extended periods of time while working and often did the same with their own children, feeling that this was the most appropriate way of caring for children in a world of extended kinship. In my own fieldwork, I came across similar attitudes towards mothering in a number of instances, although with a difference in emphasis. People told me about several cases where, according to Kazak custom, a child may be cared for by someone other than the mother: the children of a second wife may be cared for by the first wife, whilst the former carries out other work for the household; a first child may be given into the care of the grandparents, who raise him or her as their own; a child may be 'given' to a childless relative. Older informants remembered that these customs had been followed in their families, with several being brought up by a first wife and giving their first children into the care of their grandparents. On Sarybulak, younger women still reported matter-of-factly that they gave their children into the care of kin for extended periods while they were on the steppe. On Lenin and Druzhba, one of the burning topics of discussion in the Kazak communities was which kin to 'place' children with so that they could get a better education.

'There were eight of us children living in the house and various relatives too - three people at one point; plus, the present Akim would come for lunch every day with his wife, and a Russian friend, Sasha, and his wife. So, mother never cooked for less than 15/20 people for lunch. Dad would ring up at 11.30 to say x other people were coming for lunch too - inspectors, people who had come on business and so on. My mother wouldn't even ask who and why. She would just start to prepare and get everything ready. One day she was red-faced, standing over the *baursaqi* and the Akim's wife said, 'Why do you bother? Forget it! You don't get to see anything beyond your own stove. But she replied that they were guests from her husband's work and it was right that she prepared for them. She always used to say to me and my sisters, both when we were little and later on too, Never complain about having guests. There are many people who would like to have visitors but never have any. And never refuse an invitation. People may invite you once, twice, but not a third time, and in your old age, you'll want to be invited, to have company.[83]

Whereas the older woman saw meaning and dignity in her domestic labour, which was a valued contribution to the household's overall strategy, the younger one perceived it as drudgery and herself wanted something different. Women in this cohort shared a perception that Soviet work structures provided alternative sources of security and status to family and kinship networks, and in particular, widened women's horizons and gave them, as individuals, new avenues of opportunity.

This example also demonstrates that the official Soviet model of labour itself had undergone some changes in emphasis. With its stress on goals and growth, the Soviet model of labour was simultaneously disrupting the 'folk model' of labour espoused by the older generation, and, inadvertently, creating new attitudes to labour reminiscent of capitalist values of individualism and utilitarianism[84]. Whereas, for the older generation, labour for the household was a long-term project, involving building and conserving personal relationships, for their children, it was important that labour for the household brought more immediate returns. Similarly, in an inversion of the official Soviet model, the meaning of labour had become 'privatised' in the sense that, in actuality if not in ideology, the emphasis was increasingly displaced from work for the collective onto work to fulfil individual, sometimes material, aspirations, such as to buy a wall unit, or a set of porcelain, or a TV. Women as 'managers' of their household's symbolic status were often the instigators of this new form of consumption and display, using their kin and social networks to get access to 'the best' goods. Increasing amounts of time and energy were also 'stolen' from productive work in the collective to devote to work on the private plot and by some in other more lucrative activities, from grey to black market, such as trade in privately produced produce or illegal trade in cars. This was the generation of 'Soviet Brezhnev consumerism', which is now constantly evoked as a lost time of plenty, when we 'lived under communism but didn't know it'. Reminiscences of work during this period focused on the implicit contract between state and individual, by which citizens' duty to work was matched by the state's duty to provide social benefits and employment, which in turn provided an opportunity for accumulation and consumption.

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[83] Converstation with Sveta, Osakarovsky, Fieldnotes August 1998.
[84] For a discussion and further references on the Soviet state's creation of a 'commodity culture' see for example, Ries (1997: 131).

This shift in the meaning of labour towards individual reward, money, consumption and self-fulfillment was a trans-gendered one in many ways. However, there were subtle gender differences in its expression. Although both men and women began by eulogising this lost time of plenty, there was a difference in their reminiscences of its most important features. First, both men and women often focused on full employment as the central positive feature of this time. However, whilst men tended to stress the importance of money wages and their ability to purchase items for themselves, women tended to highlight other, social, benefits of working and to frame their nostalgia for regular waged work in terms of benefits for the household as a whole. As the following example shows, women also tended to put an ironical damper on men's more extravagant reminiscences:

> Ded: Before, everything was good (*ran'she, vsye bylo khorosho*). You could live on your salary, the money came on time and you could even get an advance. You could save enough to buy whatever you wanted – a television, a car. And there were no deficits here, not of food or of anything else. Maybe imported goods from Czechoslovakia for instance, were scarce and only available by *blat* – but everything was ours, and good quality.
> Tetya Anya: A pair of shoes would last for two years. A shirt wouldn't fall apart like this one he is wearing now.
> Ded: And if it was old, you threw it away and got a new one.
> Tetya Anya: The only thing they didn't sell here was meat, because people had their own and didn't need to buy it. We had our own bakery, women didn't need to bake bread. And the flour could be trusted – not like the stuff now which is supposed to be premium quality but turns the bread gluey after two days. And there was the ambulance to take you to hospital in town. Not like now, when you have to find petrol by yourself. And even before then, the *sovkhoz* would find you transport – maybe a horse or an ox, but they would find it.
> Ded: You could buy a car a month if you wanted.
> Tetya Anya: Don't be ridiculous. Stop exaggerating. I worked it out that if we saved from my salary, yours and the boys' and left enough to live on we could have bought one in a year. But anyway, he went and bought a motorbike and crashed it through a wall that he didn't even see. Blind drunk, as usual.
> Ded: We used to work then – real work. Up at 7am.
> Anya: Yes, and you'd have had time to get drunk and sober up before then too! [85].

This conversation took place in the post-Soviet period and partly reflects the current disruption of familiar patterns of work, consumption and social relations. In particular, women's castigation of men for their failure to assume a proper role in household support was one of the common responses to the current changing relationship between the household and the public domain. This issue will be addressed in detail in chapter 7. However, Anya's more ironic comments also reflect the fact, like other wives in the community, she was responsible for managing the day to day running and provisioning of the household. For her husband, waged labour might have been a question of bringing home the money for his wife to manage, saving up and getting drunk. For her, it had also to be seen in terms of how it could best be combined with domestic responsibilities to ensure household well-being. In other words, bringing in a wage was considered to be a husband's main contribution to the household, but only one of women's many responsibilities. As Martha

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[85] Lenin, fieldnotes 19/8/98.

Lampland has expressed it: 'women straddled two worlds, their work and their time bearing similarities to the structures of both their parents and their husbands'. Whilst they were engaged in waged labour, their lives were also marked by 'the never-ending cycle of domestic work (...) unsegmented and undifferentiated by days' (1995: 324). This was reminiscent of the model of labour of the presocialist household. In rural Kazakstan, this contrast between two different worlds of work and time had gender, ethnic and spatial dimensions, applying to women in general as well as to Kazaks living and working as herders out on the steppe.

Another striking difference in emphasis in men's and women's work histories concerned the relative continuity between men's and discontinuity between women's work and family identities. Whereas men's roles in waged labour and the household seemed to fit seamlessly into each other, women's stories often seemed to revolve around the split and tensions between work and family. On the one hand, far more than men, women often talked about education and waged labour outside the home in terms of individual independence, self-affirmation and confidence. Many stories centred on the value and excitement of waged work, overcoming obstacles, getting things done, being appreciated and valued for one's skills and competence. Education and then work had provided a basis for an independent life. On the other hand, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, this was contrasted with the world of home and family, governed by traditional norms and expectations. For Kazak women in particular, public waged labour paradoxically represented a 'private' space of relative freedom from kinship obligations. Buitelaar (1998) describes for Morocco how the home can be public or private space for different social actors at different times and how seemingly public spaces, such as a hammam, can be experienced as private. Especially for Kazaks, the home is not a private space for individuals in the sense we might understand it in the West. Rooms are often multifunctional spaces, used for sleeping, eating and entertaining at different times of day[86]. When at home, a woman was generally 'on call': either engaged in household tasks or expected to play the hostess for unexpected guests[87]. In addition, within the home and extended family, roles and behaviour were determined according to gender and seniority. As one woman from former *sovkhoz* Lenin describes :

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[86] On Sarybulak and in the outlying villages on Lenin, most homes were arranged and decorated in traditional style. Apart from the kitchen, the other rooms would be decorated with felt rugs on the floor and walls. A low, round table could be brought in for meals, mattresses could be laid out for sleeping or the space could be used for domestic work such as sewing or felt-making. In the Lenin central village and on Druzhba, rooms in Kazak homes were more differentiated. It was common to find individual bedrooms and a 'Russian-style' dining room with table and chairs, a display cabinet for china and manufactured carpets on the walls. Here, one of the main distinguishing features of Kazak homes was the 'summer kitchen' usually situated across the yard from the main house and used for cooking and entertaining in the summer months.

[87] In both Slav and Kazak households, there was a gradation of 'public' and 'private' spaces and behaviours within the home. One of the markers of these different domains was dress. A Russian friend, a woman of my age, spent some time explaining to me the 'proper' difference in dress code within and outside the home. Going 'outside' to the *sovkhoz* administration for example, one should put on a good dress and do one's hair and make-up. In the local neighbourhood, for example when popping across to a neighbour, one could wear more casual clothes. Inside the house, one could wear a *khalat* (housecoat), but etiquette required that one wear one's 'good' housecoat to entertain visitors and one's 'everyday' one when doing chores. Another marker was spatial. In Kazak homes, a distinction was often made between spaces where visitors were entertained and the rest of the house; when speaking to me in Russian, people often referred to an invitation to enter the latter as going '*domoi*' (home), as if entering into a more intimate domain.

'When we first got married, I was working in town, earning good money and the *kollektiv* was good, the work was interesting. He was working as a teacher on Lenin. I said, why not move to town? But he said, no, I have a good job here too. And - you know how it is, here anyway, what the man says, goes, and I came here. But his parents kept interfering all the time. When I first came here, I didn't know Kazak. I could understand it, but not speak, and they were hostile to me because of that. And we were brought up amongst Russians and I'm used to speaking my mind. They hated that too. They said I was badly brought up. How was I supposed to be? Modest. Not speak. Defer to them. But that's not me, I can't live like that' (Fieldnotes, 20 November 1996).

The reference here to marriage is important. Particularly within Kazak families, the pressure to marry and start a family was expressed in terms of a moral obligation imposed equally on young women and men by their elders. Several men reported that their parents and kin had decided when they had reached a suitable age or moment for marriage and had had a considerable say in their choice of partner. Others had been found alternative brides by the family after they had fallen unsuitably in love with divorced or non-Kazak women. Youngest sons, in particular, were expected to live with their parents, look after them in their old age and inherit the rights and obligations to land and ancestors. Their choice of employment after marriage was therefore limited to the *sovkhoz* community. However, although marriage was a central part of maintaining Kazak ethnicity and kinship solidarities for both sexes, these obligations were particularly stringent for women, who were perceived to be the moral centre of the ethnos and of the household. Although there were several instances of Kazak men marrying out of the Kazak community on Lenin, even to non-muslims, this was extremely rare for Kazak women. Second, on marriage, the local model of labour and value took precedence in expectations about women's roles. As above, most women in this cohort lived with their parents-in-law at least for an initial period, during which they were expected to behave with the proper modesty and deference. Whilst their 'inside' work became the central underpinning of family and moral value, their 'outside' work was permissible only to the extent that it did not risk bringing shame on their husband and his family. Particularly on Lenin and Sarybulak, where folk models of labour and value continued to play a greater role in working life and local identities than on Druzhba, marriage was a watershed in Kazak women's labour force participation. On Sarybulak, in particular, several of the women of this age cohort had been 'kidnapped' into marriage against their will and forced to leave further education or employment.

On Lenin, the contradictions between official and local understandings of proper behaviour were accommodated by extending Kazak categories to Soviet structures. In Kazakstan, unlike in neighbouring islamic societies such as Uzbekistan, 'inside' and 'outside' domains were not so much physically as socially circumscribed. In other words, due to the demands of the transhumant lifestyle, Kazak women were never 'secluded' inside the home. Rather, women and livestock 'circulated freely' from 'inside' one clan (their father's) to 'inside' another (their husband's). In this way, the whole encampment could be said to be 'family' or 'inside' space. I found that, on Lenin, this idea of inside space was transposed to the *sovkhoz* as a whole, which, like the encampment, was conceptualised as 'all one family'. Similarly, just as clan relationships could be 'invented' for newcomers to the aul, 'safe' relationships were imagined between girls and boys in the same class *(odnoklassniki)* and of the same age

(*rovestniki*), or colleagues in the same work collective. This allowed women's 'outside' activities, such as study or work to be classed as 'inside'. Most husbands' vehement objections to wives working related to activities which involved travel outside the *sovkhoz* and meeting strangers, particularly men[88]. However, wives' relationships with male work colleagues were an object of particular scrutiny, and women's work collectives seen as the most morally compatible work space.

Conversely, the seemingly public space of work in the *sovkhoz* actually gave women a private space in which they could to some extent escape from traditional norms of behaviour. As one woman put it, 'work is the only place I get to relax' (*dlya menya razryadka na rabote*)[89]. This was especially true of work in 'women's collectives' such as the accountancy department in the Lenin farm office, where women amongst themselves were able to be raucous, vulgar and loud in ways they could not contemplate at home. At the women only '*gulyanki*' (parties) which were one of the striking features of work life, Kazak women would often speak ironically about their lives and relationships in a way I did not observe elsewhere, criticising their husbands, making sexual innuendos and drinking vodka. This is not to say that this was a space with no social control. On the contrary, one of the marked features of this work collective was the way that women monitored each others' behaviour and ensured that boundaries could be played with, but not overstepped, or, more importantly, should not be seen to be overstepped. For example, drinking between women was acceptable, but for a woman to be seen to be drunk 'inside' the *kontora* when men were present or outside the *kontora* was definitely not[90]. Likewise, to 'steal' time at or after work for a *gulyanka* was fine, but to be too late home and therefore neglect domestic responsibilities was not. For example, my hostess and her sister on Lenin described an occasion when one of the women from the *kontora* had got so drunk that she had fallen over when dancing with one of the male brigade leaders and had brought a set of crystal glasses crashing to the floor. The criticism aimed at her was not just because she had broken these precious status goods, which had been brought from home, but because she had also broken an important taboo and put *all* the women's reputations in danger. As they put it: 'She drinks like a man; she doesn't know her own limits. All the men were laughing and mocking her and we all felt as through we *were* her, as though it were us that were behaving that way. Afterwards, it might get out that all the women in the *kontora* were drunkards and alcoholics.' In a metaphor for women's wider relationship between work and family

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[88] Men's 'jealousy' or 'scandal making' at home was often a subject of women's conversations and it seemed that their work lives were particularly at issue. In one characteristic example, a woman described how her husband would deprive her of sleep when she first decided to go back to work after marriage, constantly waking her up to say, "Why do you want to work? It's just so you can be with men".

[89] This is a particular 'ethnic' take on a wider relationship between women and work collectives. In 'Redefining the Collective' Sarah Ashwin (1999) describes how women workers in general perceived work collectives both as a haven from the pressures of running a household and as a vital source of emotional support, a kind of 'second family' which acted as a buttress to the actual family, often portrayed as a cause of distress. In comparison, although male workers were also attached to their work collectives, they provided a different kind of respite, as a form of light relief and all-male haven from the female-dominated domestic world. These observations broadly apply to the work collectives I observed on Druzhba and Lenin. One interesting contrast is that women in the Lenin work collective *did* drink and socialize together outside work time, which Ashwin found to be a male activity, and that men and women in the *kontora* did sometimes drink and socialize together.

[90] Fieldnotes, Lenin, 26.9.97

responsibilities, women were therefore stretching, but not breaking, ascribed gender norms – whilst they could let off steam, they also had to control themselves because they were the mainstay of the domestic sphere, the *khozyaika doma*[91], the protector and keeper of the family.

For women of this age cohort, engagement in public labour was therefore important, but also something that had to be negotiated with husbands and kin and balanced against other responsibilities in the home, smallholding and ritual economy. The latter work, while 'invisible' and valued less highly in terms of the 'Soviet model of labour' was a key part of local models and identities and circumscribed women's work and family trajectories to different extents in different *sovkhoz* communities and ethnic groups. Women's work collectives in many ways served as a 'bridge' between the two domains: they gave women a status in 'official' life yet were also recognised as a discrete unit to be included in ceremonial; they served both to defuse tensions and contradictions and as an agent of social control; and the solidarities consolidated at work were the basis for alternative networks that could be used to enhance household well-being and status.

The rural gender contract as an expression of cultural persistence and social change

The material from life histories illustrates that the rural gender contract was the result of the collision and accommodation between two different ways of imagining and structuring gender domains, a spatial metaphor of 'inside/outside' and a functional metaphor of 'productive/reproductive' work, introduced by Soviet development policy. On the one hand, it demonstrates the disruption of indigenous categories and a shift over time towards the productive/reproductive metaphor. However,

it also demonstrates that the relationship was more complex. Soviet development brought together several different ethnic groups in a new socio-economic environment. The establishment of the Lenin state farm community involved their mutual adaptation to each other as well as to Soviet norms, roles and values. The result was both a distinction between and a drawing together of the two metaphors, which were sometimes opposed, sometimes juxtaposed and sometimes transposed, as when Soviet structures were seen in terms of native categories, or vice versa.

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[91] This term is not the same as the Russian word for housewife, which is *domokhozhyaika*. It is much closer to the supposedly obsolete term *domokhozyaina* meaning mistress of a peasant household.

Indigenous inside/outside metaphor	**Soviet production/reproduction or work/family metaphor**

- ➢ Shift over generations towards use of work/family metaphor for talking about gender domains
- ➢ Accommodation of both metaphors in different settings or circumstances

<u>opposition</u>

used by Kazaks, population in outlying villages in 'informal' talk, in ordering space in the home	used by Russians, population in central village, in 'official talk'

<u>transposition</u>

sovkhoz as a whole, or parts of the *sovkhoz*, defined as 'inside' space	work for the household defined as 'reproductive'

<u>juxtaposition or 'bilingualism'</u>

both metaphors used by the same individual in different circumstances, as people needed to respect both in order to create a 'proper' social identity.

Figure 2.3: Metaphors for gender domains

On Lenin, the public domain of the *sovkhoz* was therefore understood both in terms of the official distinction between productive and reproductive labour and in terms of local ideas of kinship and community. The rural gender contract represented a combined expression of these two metaphors. It was a supple and flexible idiom, which enabled ideas about women's and men's complementary contributions to a common household project to be transposed to the changed conditions. Essentially, the idea that men and women had different roles to play was translated into different idioms for talking about the work they did, with men's work described in terms of providing a money income, and women's work described in terms of feeding the family. This model was flexible enough both to encompass social and economic transformation and to accommodate it with local understandings of the 'proper' gender division of roles.

The persistence of the indigenous metaphor can be interpreted in a number of ways. One argument is that some cognitive structures or cultural elements – in this case, understandings about the roles of women and men – are more durable or change more slowly than others[92]. Another is that Soviet ideology and practice itself helped to reinforce symbolic meaning structures (Sneath, 2000, 272-3; Humphrey, 1998: 288)[93].

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[92] Two concepts which are useful here are 'hardprogamming' (Bateson, 1972: 469-505, cited Rudie 1994: 59) or habitus, a 'common cognitive system of durable, transposable dispositions shared by a group or social class' (Bourdieu, 1977: 72).

[93] In this connection, Svanberg's (1989) research on cultural persistence and social change amongst Kazak refugees in Turkey also provides an interesting point of reference and comparison. He found that, unlike the traditional Kazak political and administrative structure, patterns of kinship and gender relations persisted in spite of change. He argues that these were especially important elements of social reality or 'core values', which, in a new and potentially hostile environment, came to symbolise the identity of the Kazak community and which the group therefore tried to maintain. He also emphasises that these core elements themselves changed on contact with the wider Turkish society, particularly with the processes of education and urbanisation.

The relationship between indigenous Kazak and Slav gender domains on Lenin opens an interesting perspective on the interrelation between cultural 'durability' and outside influences. One of the striking things about the rural gender contract was that it was the metaphor which both Kazak and Slav respondents used to express the relationship between the sexes. One explanation for this would be that Kazak and Slav indigenous cultures converged in their understandings of proper gender domains.

One of the key debates in the cultural history of Russia concerns the confrontation between the 'westernising' principles introduced into Petrine Russia and the 'Asiatic' principles which structured Muscovy and which persisted in rural life[94]. Howe's (1991) analysis of Russian peasant society highlights some of the similarities in social organisation, notably the structure of Russian peasant society into 'communes' (*obshchina-mir*) reminiscent of Kazak clans, which organised economic life and had a similar system of mutual aid, including feasting. His analysis, which draws on the work of Russian ethnographer T.A. Bernshtam (1988) also highlights a similar gender and age-related organisation of space and labour within the *mir* and individual households. In ritual and symbolism, women and men were associated with different spheres, notably inner and outer space and lower and upper worlds. This symbolic ordering was reflected in the division of space within the home, with the main living quarters (*izba*) divided into a male and female half (*kut'*). Howe also gives a number of examples of how this gendered separation was reflected in the division of labour and points to the centrality of marriage in completing an individual's 'formation' as a social person. However, only a minority of the Slav villagers had come directly from peasant backgrounds.

Another explanation would relate to the demarcation that the Soviet state itself created between public and private domains, that is, between the official world of state ideology and the private world of the family (Shlapentokh, 1989). This split between outside/official/state and inside/private/family domains applied across the Lenin community. It consolidated the role of the household for both Kazaks and Slavs, helped to maintain its gender division of labour and gave women a central position in symbolising and upholding proper morality[95]. This points to a coincidence or growing together of Slav and indigenous identities in at least some rural communities under the conditions of socialism[96]. On the other hand, as this discussion has shown, we can also say that, although the rural gender contract was a trans-ethnic one, Kazaks and Slavs on Lenin tended to stress different metaphors, with Slavs more invested in the production/reproduction and Kazaks more invested in the inside/outside metaphors for ordering gender domains. Similarly, we can say that at community level, reflecting their level of incorporation into the state development project, on Lenin, and on Sarybulak, the accommodation favoured the indigenous metaphor, whereas on Druzhba, it favoured the productive/reproductive one.

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[94] For a recent discussion, see for example the chapter on 'European Russia' in Orlando Figes, 2002. *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia,* Penguin, London.

[95] See also the discussion on 'Voices, Veils, Visibility' in Pesmen (2000: 248-252).

[96] A similar argument is made by Bavna Dhave's paper (1996) 'A Cross-Ethnic Russian-Speaking Identity in Kazakstan.

Power, value and inequality in the rural gender contract

Referring back to the earlier discussion on the indigenous economy, we can also say that the rural gender contract contained both elements of egalitarianism and elements of inequality, that the different participants evaluated the relationship between them differently and that while the contract may have remained 'the same', the balance had altered significantly. Although both women and men were 'resource persons' in the public and domestic spheres, the value given to their contributions can be seen from various points of view. On the one hand, 'the relationship between the dimensions involved in inequality - differentials in power and autonomy, prestige and authority, and value accorded to individuals of either sex - is rarely one to one, and men and women need not even agree about the interpretation of situations in which both take part' (Rudie, 1994: 77). Whilst male respondents tended to stress their authority and the primacy of their contributions to the household, women's views were more nuanced. From the 'official' perspective, although Soviet development policy stressed women's as well as men's productive roles, it also demarcated and valued public over domestic work and gave primacy to public over domestic and ritual resources. From the perspective of the indigenous model, the household economy and village ceremonial remained important spheres of practice and identity. Rudie's analysis of the changing hierarchy in gender roles brought about by modernisation in Indonesia is apposite here:

> 'The complementarity between the sexes used to lie on a reproductive and ritual level more than on the strictly economic level. Village ceremonial is a joint effort with male and female specializations, and husband and wife both work to place their own household firmly in the local ritual community. In that sense, there is mutual dependency between the spouses that rests on the performance of each in complementary unisex collectivities. In a transformed society, the economic equality sometimes breaks down, and complementarity can creep in larger areas of household work – the housewife role being specialized and ritualized as a goal in itself. Whether this situation of dependency is mutual or unbalanced depends on the perspective taken. If it is important to have the housewife services as such, it is mutual. If we focus on the question of who brings in most of the resources, it will usually be unbalanced.' (Rudie, 1994: 167).

Although Soviet policy did not specifically emphasise women's role as housewives, its gender ambiguities nonetheless helped to shape just the category of husband-cum-bread-winner that it hoped to eradicate, thereby shifting the balance of value within households[97]. The following chapter looks at the environment of perestroika and post-socialism, specifically the new state ideology of development which has reinforced the construction of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers.

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[97] In the Lenin school library, I discovered a 1980s course book on life-skills, which pointed to the dangers of masculinization of women and feminisation of men in Soviet society, and urged girls to remember that a husband was the main pillar of support for the family, responsible for providing materially and financially. Analysis of an 'essentialist' shift in state gender ideology and policy in the late Soviet period is discussed in Buckley, M. (ed), 1986 and Lynne Atwood's work on sex-role stereotyping in education, for example, in 'The New Soviet Man and Woman: Soviet views on sex differences' in Holland, B. (ed. 1985) *Soviet Sisterhood.* London: Fourth Estate.

CHAPTER THREE

Gendering the Postsocialist Framing of Development

We have seen that the current development project inherited a landscape in which Soviet and indigenous features were intertwined in various ways. In particular, I have argued that the interaction between Soviet development policy and local meanings and practices created a specific interrelation between public and domestic spheres and a particular constellation of gender relations. At state level, development policy was underpinned by a socialist 'gender regime' which was variously resisted and accommodated by individuals and communities, producing specific 'rural gender contract(s)' at local level. The interrelation between macro and micro levels can therefore be seen as a dialectical process, in which the way that the state framed development and gender discourse affected the ways in which communities and individuals shaped and framed their own experience and, conversely, individual responses impacted on the outcomes of state policy.

The question to be addressed in this chapter is, how is 'development' currently being framed at macro level in Kazakstan and how is this framing taking account of gender issues (if at all)? What are the ideologies and aims driving development policies and what are the continuities and ruptures with the Soviet development model? The chapter looks briefly at the processes of state and nation-building, before turning to more detailed analysis of the ideologies and aims driving economic development policies. It draws on material from several periods of fieldwork conducted between 1996 and 1998, particularly interviews and participatory observation in government bodies and international organisations, together with discourse analysis of their policy and programme documents and reports. The bulk of the research was conducted in 1996, with follow-up research to assess the evolution of ideology and practice over the next two years. Although it is a study dated to a particular period, the general issues raised are still germane.

The issue of changes in development ideology and practice is an important one. There have been several changes in both since Kazakstan became independent in 1991. These have been defined as an initial orientation towards nation-building and the strengthening of political independence from 1991-1993; the pre-eminence of economic parameters from 1992-1995; followed, in 1996, by certain moves towards socially-oriented reforms (UNDP, 1997). The bulk of my in-depth field research spans the cusp between the two later stages of reform and therefore captures a specific moment in a period of complex transformations. In particular, it questions the neat division between these two stages of reform, suggesting a certain time-lag between the ideological shift to a more socially-oriented model of development and its implementation in practice, especially as regards rural development and gender issues.

I. Gender, State-Building and Nationalism

Since Kazakstan's independence in 1991, the earlier discourse of 'democratisation' that began with perestroika has largely been replaced by a dual discourse of state-building and

economic reform.[98] What shape should the new nation-state adopt and how should it relate to the past, both Soviet and pre-Soviet? What does it mean to be a Kazakstani citizen, man or woman, ethnic Kazak, Russian, German, or Greek? A process of national identity formation is currently taking place at state, community and individual level alike as Kazakstan finds a place on the global stage and its people their place within the new nation.

To what extent is state and nation building in Kazakstan a gendered project? What different kinds of representations and ideologies of gender are being expressed and transmitted, and how do they relate to the representations explored in the previous chapter? Rather than being an exhaustive exploration, this section is intended to raise questions about several elements of the Kazak state-building project which are contributing to a redefinition of the parameters of gender relations and which had resonance at local level in my fieldwork communities.

As Nick Megoran (1999) points out in an exploratory study, although there is now a growing body of literature on the process of national identity formation and reconstruction in Central Asia, current scholarship has so far given little attention to the question of whether the process is gendered, and if so, how[99]. On the other hand, recent scholarship has argued that notions of gender and sexuality are central to the identity formation process in the modern nation state. First, to refer back to the discussion in Chapter One, it has been argued that men and women have been incorporated differently in the nation state in Western Europe, where the seemingly gender neutral political discourse of liberal democracy maintains a division between public and private life which excludes women from full citizenship (Pateman, 1989). Accordingly, the adoption of 'Western' political discourse and models of the state is not a gender-neutral process. Second, as discussed in the previous chapter, the former socialist countries were a major proving ground for experiments in both the social organisation of gender and the attempted redefinition of national identity (Verdery, 1994). In particular, as we have seen, in Central Asia, the emancipation of women was one of the defining elements of the ideological construction of Soviet Central Asian identities and, conversely, gender was also central to the way alternative, local and ethnic identities were constructed. As Shirin Akiner (1997) suggests, given this interlacing of gender, nation and ethnicity, it is not surprising that, as part of the current, post-independence process of refashioning national identities, the validity of the Soviet view of gender relations is being called into question.

In effect, the search for a 'national I' to underpin the new state of Kazakstan involves a (re)evaluation of the heritage of the Soviet and pre-Soviet past, as well as of the models of 'modernity' offered by other nations on the global stage. Reaching across time and space, it involves three key processes: the revival of archaic, pre-Soviet forms and values; the

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[98] A similar process has been noted in Russia (Pilkington, 1995) and Eastern Europe (Einhorn, 1993).

[99] Two exceptions widely available in the West are Shirin Akiner (1997) 'Between tradition and modernity: the dilemma facing contemporary Central Asian women' in Buckley (ed. 1997) *Post-Soviet women: from the Baltic to Central Asia*, Cambridge, CUP: 261-304; and Nayereh Tohidi, 'The intersection of gender, ethnicity and Islam in Soviet and post-Soviet Azerbaijan, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 25, No 1, 1997. For local sources, see Usacheva (1997) in the UNDP sponsored *Republic of Kazakstan Report on the Status of Women,* 1997 and the chapters by Miimanbaeva and Shukurova in *Zhenshchiny Kyrgyzstana: Traditsii i novaya real'nost' (Women of Kyrgyzstan: Traditions and New Reality*) (1995).

rejection or inversion of Soviet forms and the selective adoption of 'modern' ones from the 'western' or 'capitalist' other. These processes are not discrete or bounded, but need to be seen in relation to each other as part of a complex and often contradictory process of (re)balancing[100].

State-building and drawing on the deep past: reinventing tradition

One of the first things to strike the visitor to Almaty, the usual gateway into Kazakstan and the former capital, is the fact that most of the street names have recently been changed. Russian names have been replaced by Kazak ones, Kommunistichesky Prospekt has become Abylai Khan Dangghyly, Dzerzhinsky has been replaced by Kazybek Bi. Almost overnight, a street geography which celebrated Soviet holidays, achievements and personalities has been replaced by a specifically Central Asian geography, which draws heavily on the pre-Soviet past. This is also the case in the countryside, where many districts and collective and state farms have been rebaptized with Kazak names. In Almaty, the most dramatic example of this 'retraditionalization' of public spaces has been the raising of a pillar in the central Republic Square, topped by a huge statue modelled on the 'Golden Man', a warrior's costume discovered in Yessik, about 40 km East of Almaty, whose headdress bears a pair of snow-leopards and a winged mythical beast.

This symbolic representation of the nation-state through the honouring of pre-Soviet figures, the changing of street, locality and town names and the creation of new national holidays has been identified as process common to the 'nationalizing regimes' of Central Asia (Bohr, 1998). It points towards one of the striking aspects of the nation-building process in Kazakstan – a rejection of Soviet-type socialism and an exploration of the 'traditional' past. Both State and popular discourse have been marked by attempts to establish linkages between the pre-colonial past and the post-soviet present, involving the reviving of 'authentic' traditional and Islamic customs, institutions, symbols and concepts (Akbarzadeh, 1994; Altoma, 1994; Akiner, 1995; Werner, 1998b). This is evident in the symbols used to represent the new state's international identity, such as the national flag and currency[101]. It is also evident in the state's domestic efforts to sponsor the publication of books on Kazak history, tradition and genealogy and to introduce a national heritage programme in schools (Werner, ibid: 5)[102].

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[100] I am indebted to the approach used by for example David Anderson (1998) in his work on landscape and national identity.

[101] The national flag includes a representation of the steppe eagle, which Kazakhs used as a hunting bird; the coat-of-arms depicts winged horses, a symbol from Kazak mythology, together with the sacred smoke-hole wheel of the yurt; and the national colours of blue and gold, which represent the sky and the sun, have a symbolic link to the ancient Kazakh cult of the Sky God (Akiner, 1995: 61).

[102] Various studies in emerging states across the former socialist bloc have pointed to a similar resurgence of interest in the 'deep' or 'traditional' past (Humphrey, 1992; Akbarzadeh, 1994; Andersen, 1998a; Watson, 1994). As Caroline Humphrey (1992: 375) points out with reference to post-socialist Mongolia, this is not only because the end of Soviet colonialism has provided an opportunity for peoples to reclaim the past on their own terms, but also because 'historical origin in traditional culture has become the source of moral authority in the present'.

Knowledge that was suppressed during the Soviet period is therefore being openly expressed in the public sphere. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, the past is by no means easy to (re)establish. For the majority of the Kazak population, direct connection with indigenous knowledge and traditions has been lost. The recreation of the past must therefore be seen in the light of present concerns: at macro level, in terms of the state's need to establish political legitimacy and implement economic restructuring and, at micro level, people's need to make sense of rapidly changing circumstances. To borrow Caroline Humphrey's phrase, if 'the present is an era the way that a roller-coaster is a place', then the pre-Soviet past holds out a promise of rootedness and stability (ibid.: 377).

What representations of male and female roles are being drawn from traditional culture to serve as a blueprint for future development? Whilst a growing body of research has examined the implications of 'traditional' symbolic representations and other, manifestations of the revival of traditional identities for non-indigenous citizens of the new states (Ayaganov, 1995; Dixon 1994; Dave 1995; Edmunds, 1998; Khazanov, 1995; Kosmarskaya, 1996)[103], the gender specific nature of these acts has not been examined in detail. However, as Megoran (1999) points out, the characters being celebrated are almost all male, from aggressive warriors such as Timur to mystical poets such as Navoiy, who employed highly gendered and stereotyped language. One could say that, symbolically, public spaces are being 'retraditionalised', but also 'remasculinised'; which begs the question, where are the women and what is their place in this revival of tradition?

Reconstructing citizenship: relocating women to the private sphere as mothers and homemakers.

The new Constitution of the Republic of Kazakstan begins with a definition of the legal status of citizenship and mechanisms for upholding it, and is grounded in the ideals of democracy, human rights and the law (UNDP, 1995: 81). In particular, it continues to uphold the explicit commitment to gender equality already enshrined in Soviet legislation. Section 2 Article 14 states that:

1. All are equal before the law and the courts.
2. No one may be subjected to any form of discrimination on the grounds of background, social, professional or property status, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude to religion, beliefs, place of residence or any other reason.

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[103] Timothy Edmunds, for example, stresses that nation-building has been characterised by attempts to reassert the prominence of the Kazak 'nation' in the political and cultural life of the republic. Constitutionally, Kazakstan is defined very clearly as a *unitary* state, whose purpose is to provide a vehicle for the self-determination of the Kazak nation. Thus, although constitutional provisions guarantee equal rights to all citizens, this represents a clear choice of an ethnic over a civic identity for the Kazakstani state. Nation-building has primarily taken the form of a revival of Kazak national and cultural identity and a corresponding process of Kazakization in the administration and government, policies which have caused uneasiness among many non-Kazaks in Kazakstan. One interesting micro-level study of how Russian women in Kyrgyzstan are reacting to a similar 'return to ethnicity' has been conducted in Kyrgyzstan (Kosmarskaya, 1996).

Article 27 goes further, stating that marriage and the family, motherhood, *fatherhood* and childhood are protected by the state and that care for children and their upbringing is the natural right and duty of *parents*[104], thereby widening the field of choice for men and enshrining their rights, as well as women's, in the private sphere. However, looking beyond the constitution to state gender discourse as a whole, the picture is rather more complex. In particular, I shall argue that the dominant form of discourse is undermining women's citizenship in various ways.

As I described in chapter 2, one of the most striking features of the Soviet state-building discourse was its focus on gender relations, theorised in terms of the 'woman question'. In contrast, the most striking feature of the state-building discourse in post-Soviet Kazakhstan is the 'disappearance' of gender issues. As Akhmedzhanova and Shakirova (1997) put it in their contribution to the 1997 Republic of Kazakstan Report on the Status of Women:

> 'No conceptually based vision of women's issues has arisen in society over recent years. As a rule, the problems of women are lumped together with those of the family, children and youth. There is only one governmental structure today devoted to women's issues (a consultative-discussion body, under the purview of the President of the Republic of Kazakstan), and even that is named the Committee on Issues of the Family, Women and Demographic Policy. The President's program, Women and Children of Kazakstan, is still in the development stage.' (1997: 19)

Gender, in terms of the emancipation of women or sexual equality, is no longer a central pillar of the state development programme or ideology and indeed, now commonly carries negative connotations[105]. For example, the document *Kazakstan 2030* (Nazarbaev, 1998), in which the president sets out the state's action plan for the next thirty years, makes many references to the family, but one has to read a long way into the program to find the single, cursory mention of women's rights, in the phrase: 'When parents are concerned for their children, in childhood and adulthood, and for their aged parents, when women are respected in the family and in society, then we can be reassured about our country. These were always important principles to the Kazak people and we must revive them' (Nazarbaev, ibid.: 65). However, albeit brief, when taken in the context of the document as a whole, this clause points to the implicit gendering of the nation-building discourse, characterised by a marked shift in discourse on the family, which is significantly reconfiguring women's citizenship in the new Kazakstan.

Firstly, a connection is being made here between building the Kazak state and the revival of national values and traditions, exemplified in 'respect' for women. The implication is that this 'respect' has been lost and needs to be rediscovered or recreated, in order for the Kazak people to be 'reassured about their country'. What this means in terms of the constitution of

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[104] My italics.

[105] A section of the Republic of Kazakstan Report on the Status of Women (1997) points to a widespread, negative view of women's emancipation, citing examples from the media such as the following: 'The main culprit behind the fact that our girls cannot achieve personal happiness is satanic emancipation and rotten feminism/ feminisation'; or, 'One of the best ways out of this dead-end is a return to tradition, and the legalization of marriage to two or more women...' (Zaitsev and Barteneva, Republic of Kazakstan Report on the Status of Women 1997, Chapter 19, 'Women and the Media': 81-84, 84).

the family and the nation, and women's place in both, is implicitly stated in the remainder of this paragraph and in the discourse of the document as a whole. On the one hand, there has been a shift from the language of women's 'participation' in society to the more passive 'respect', in which women figure as recipients or symbols of the nation's honour rather than as active contributors to the building of society. On the other hand, the recreation of 'respect' is linked to an inversion of the Soviet formulation of women's 'proper domain' - from 'society and the family' to 'family and society'. This inversion is emphasised in the remaining text, which speaks exclusively of women's demographic contribution as mothers, whilst making no allusion to their role as workers, that was equally constitutive of citizenship in the Soviet state. This shift from public to private spheres is revealed in a second, telling shift of emphasis: whereas during the Soviet period, the maternal role was divorced from domesticity, the domestic context has now been reinstated and child-rearing accorded the same importance as child-bearing. This highlights women's role as moral educators of the new generation rather than as intellectuals or workers in their own right (Akiner, 1997: 287; Usacheva, 1997: 11). Further, it seems that 'respect' for women as mothers involves the questioning of certain individual rights granted to women during the Soviet period: the same paragraph goes on to question the right to abortion, in the interest of improving women's health and strengthening the institutions of marriage and the family

In Kazakstan, as in Eastern and Central Europe, women's citizenship is therefore being undercut by the ideology of 'retraditionalization', which glorifies the family and women's role within it as mothers and bearers of moral, spiritual and cultural values, whereas it is the public sphere of the market place and mainstream political institutions that are now the important arenas of power and the locus of right in an emerging liberal-democratic state (Verdery, 1994; Einhorn, 1993). The framing of discourse in terms of women's 'return' to the domestic sphere naturalises what is actually a new construction of gendered public and private space. As I argued in the previous chapter, in so far as the Kazak indigenous economy has been dramatically transformed by Soviet development policy, there can be no simple 'return' in this sense. Nationalist discourse asks us to forget that the current domestic sphere is being constructed in relation to the emerging market sphere, and thereby masks emerging gender assymetries. It asks women to take their 'natural' and 'traditional' place as 'guardians of the fire' and men to take their place as guardians of the family, in the name of the nation and future generations.

The nation as patriarchal family

A similar discourse on the relocation of women to the private sphere has also been described in relation to nation building elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, where it has been linked with a shift in discourse on the family and the nation. Verdery has interpreted this in terms of a backlash against the socialist state's usurpation of familial-patriarchal authority and its replacement by policies and attitudes aimed at recovering that lost authority for men in nuclear families (Verdery, 1994: 252). Taking a slightly different emphasis, Einhorn's interpretation stresses the nationalist project's attempt to (re)create a national identity based on the idealisation of a mythic harmonious community of an earlier epoch, accompanied by a model of the family characterised by a strictly gender-divided hierarchy of roles (Einhorn 1993: 128).

In my view, nationalist discourse as it is currently being expressed at state level in Kazakstan can be approached from both angles, although the question deserves further attention. The return to values of 'respect' for women, now posited as a key Kazak tradition, can be interpreted, to borrow Shirin Akiner's (1997) term, as an end to the 'emasculation' imposed by the Soviet *khudzhum.* Order and propriety are to be restored, in both nation and family, and guaranteed by a return of male guardianship[106]. At the highest level, this reassertion of patriarchal authority is manifested in the identification of the head of state as 'Father of the Nation'. On the other hand, as in Einhorn's analysis, nation is being construed as an idealised family or kinship-based community, based on the 'consensus-hierarchy' traditions of Kazak society (Nazarbaev, 1998: 16). As Nazarbaev puts it, although the country has so far avoided internal conflict, 'we are still a long way from consolidation and unity, and considerable efforts will need to be made so that we feel like one big family, know our objectives and move towards them with one voice' (1998: 15-16). In this model of family and nation, questions of power are occluded: divergent interests are to be set aside in pursuit of a common goal - set by the wise patriarch.

The identification between nation and patriarchal family is a metaphor which runs throughout the document *Kazakstan 2030.* One of the most striking images is the personification of the nation as a (male) snow-leopard[107], who 'will never attack first and will avoid conflict' but 'if his home and freedom or the lives of his young are threatened, will protect them at any price'; who will be 'wise in bringing up his offspring, protecting them from uninvited guests, giving them the tastiest morsels, concerning himself with their health, education and outlook, preparing them for early independence in conditions of intense competition and adaptability in all environments'. He will 'make sure that the water he drinks is not muddied and that air and nature are made pure'; and he will be 'united with his brothers, who were nourished by the same mother' (1998: 27).

A number of things strike me particularly here: at one level, the metaphor makes concrete the aim explicitly set out at the beginning of this section of the document, that is, the need for the new independent state of Kazakstan to combine the best of East and West, ancient and modern. The animal is an explicitly Central Asian beast, which symbolically spans both the modern (as the equivalent of the Asian 'Tiger Economies') and the ancient (the environment and the land). However, at another level, the image is highly gendered : there is the language of the nation as (male) warrior/hero, ready to protect his home and his young; the image of the fraternity of Central Asian nations, 'nourished by the same mother,' reasserting the

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[106] One particularly striking example of this kind of discourse is A.D. Serdyukov, *Russkii Matriarchal: Kniga dlya mushchin o seksual'nom povedenii zhenshchin,* Almaty, 1996. According to his analysis, 'In the Soviet Union, women and the state conspired to the detriment of men. The fact that women dominated goes against natural laws and led to disorder. In post-war Soviet society, everything was subjugated to women's and children's needs; socialism survived on the slave labour of millions of men. Who will protect men against women and against society? Democratic society requires a sexual revolution to restore the rightful place of men. In nature, the male has priority over the female, and protects them in a herd. This book should be seen as scientific research.'

[107] As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the snow leopard is one of the symbols on the 'golden man' statue which has been erected opposite the presidential palace in Almaty.

principle of kinship and unity among men; and finally, the image of women as mothers, whose authority lies in giving birth to the heroes who will defend the nation.

As the above example shows, the ethno-national symbols which are part of the state-building discourse in Kazakstan are being expressed in highly gendered terms, here, in opposition to Soviet models of nation and family, as a re-articulation of the 'traditional' values of masculine authority over the family/nation and women's authority within the private sphere, as mothers and nourishers of the new generation. If the nation is to combine the best of West and East, parliamentarianism, secularism and the market, combined with a respect for traditional values, then discourse is figuring men as both 'West' and 'East', whilst figuring women as essentially 'East'.

State-building and Islam

One of the 'Eastern' poles of the new national identity is Islam. During the Soviet period, ethnographers noted that national and religious identity were closely linked in Central Asia to the extent that 'differentiating between the religious and the national (was) exceptionally difficult' (Vaganov, 1988: 194, cited Akbarzadeh, 1994: 3). On the one hand, the fluid nature of Islam in the region permitted the incorporation of pre-Islamic cultural practices, such as sacrificing animals, visiting tombs and preservation of ancestor cults, thereby intertwining Islamic and cultural identities. On the other hand, the link between religious and national identity was further strengthened by Soviet development policies and local responses to them, which constructed Islam as an ethnic marker, defining indigenous self-identity and differentiating it from Slav or Soviet identities[108]. With respect to Kazakstan, although the point is often made that Islam was 'weaker' in nomadic society, where transhumance and oral traditions inhibited the development of mosque attendance and knowledge of the Koran, 'muslimness' was a key part of Kazaks' cultural and ethnic self-identifications (Mustafina, 1992; Altoma, 1994).

Given these strong links between Islam and indigenous cultural traditions, it is not surprising that it has now become an important element in the discourse and practice of nation-building. As Akbarzadeh (1994) describes, the very fluidity of the Islam that has survived in cultural traditions allows it to be used by diverse political forces. His analysis of the ways in which the ruling parties in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have invoked Islam to consolidate their power bases and pursue the national economic interest is also relevant to Kazakstan.

Most Western scholarship on the revitalization of Islam in Central Asia has been pre-occupied with the extent to which it will fill the political vacuum left by the demise of communism and particularly the risk of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and regional instability. However, again, like the other strands of the 'traditionalist' discourse with which it is entwined, the discourse of re-islamicization is also gendered.

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[108] There is an interesting parallel here with some of the literature on Bosnia, which explores a similar intertwining of religious and ethnic identity. See for example Cornelia Sorabji, in R.Hinde and H. Watson (eds. 1995), War a cruel necessity?: The bases of institutionalised violence. Palgrave Macmillan.

The gendered analyses tend to see both Islamic and traditionalist discourse as part of a general propagandising of a 'conservative utopia' which is 'exclusively patriarchal in content and repressive towards women' (Usacheva, op. cit.: 12). To cite Usacheva, 'the opinion of religious adepts on 'the woman question' is clear: the woman must always and in all situations submit to the man, serve him and recognise his supremacy over her in all areas. This related to wives first of all' (ibid.: 12). However, as recent feminist scholarship has been careful to point out, one must be cautious about construing islamicisation universally in terms of the victimization of women (Ask and Tjomsland, 1998; Fawzi El-Solh and Mabro, 1994). Different Muslim discourses depicting modernist, traditionalist and fundamentalist trends all have diverging views on women's social position. In addition, women may develop distinct voices and participate in the islamisation process in various ways. With regard to Central Asia in particular, it has been shown that, in some contexts, women played a central role as 'guardians of the faith' in Soviet times transmitting and creating religious rituals in private that were taboo in the public sphere (Tett, 1994). From this perspective, it is interesting that in Kazakstan, women's involvement in the resurgence of Islam is demonstrated in the creation of the League of Muslim Women of Kazakhstan, which is one of the few women's organisations to have branches throughout the country. The emergence of this official, islamic, women's organisation raises a number of important questions relating to the nature of state discourse and its impact on gender relations.

Contested spaces: the fragmentation of gender discourse in post-Soviet Kazakstan

So far I have argued that, symbolically, state discourse is placing women and men in different and asymmetrical positions to citizenship and the nation state. In a retrenchment from or reversal of Soviet state policies on 'the woman question', emphasis is no longer being placed on sexual equality, but on returning women to their 'natural' roles in the domestic sphere. This shift is being underpinned by rhetoric which draws on a reinvented image of family and society in the pre-Soviet, indigenous past. State-building is figured as the revival of national identity and the reinstatement of moral and spiritual values that were 'lost' during the Soviet period. This process is implicitly gendered: the central symbols of this revival of traditional cultural and religious identities are the re-valuing of male figures and symbols in public space and the directing of women's energies to the domestic sphere, together with the revival of images of the state as patriarchal family, headed by a wise patriarch.

What are the implications, at macro level, of the fact that men and women are symbolically being placed in different and asymmetrical positions to citizenship and the nation state? One argument is that since 'traditional' attitudes and practices continued to be influential in the private sphere during the Soviet period, their appearance in the public sphere does not signal a change but a recognition of how things actually were (Akiner, 1997). While this may be the case, it is important to point out that the disappearance of the 'Soviet side of the equation' changes the locus and meaning of 'traditional' culture. On the one hand, private values and practices may be changed by their very emergence into the public sphere, where they become subject to different standards of performance and appraisal. Practices that may have been flexible may become more rigid and fixed. For example, whilst it may have been appropriate for women to 'carry' many important cultural and religious identities and practices during the

Soviet period, this may be unacceptable when 'tradition' and religion take on a more public face. On the other hand, during the Soviet period, traditional practices and attitudes existed in relation to (or in tension with) Soviet ideologies and policies. The fact that individuals were, to varying degrees, obliged to follow traditional custom in private and Soviet custom in public, also meant that they had an opportunity to negotiate between different roles and identities. I have argued that for women, in particular, Soviet ideology and policy promulgated (at least in theory) an egalitarian model of gender relations. A body of laws existed which could be drawn on by individuals, and protected women's educational, employment and reproductive rights. Although neo-traditionalist discourse may not directly threaten these rights, it does create a social climate in which rights can be changed or eroded. As I have discussed, although equal rights are enshrined in the new Constitution, the framing of programmes and policies has been influenced by the new vision of citizenship and the nation. As in Russia (Pilkington, 1995) the growing emphasis on the family may be influencing the drafting of legislation, such as the Family, Labour and Criminal Codes, in ways that undercut women's rights and entitlements[109]. In an interview with a Western consultant to the President and Cabinet of Ministers on law reform, I was told that, although *kalym*, bride-stealing and under-age marriage are all illegal under the criminal code, due to pressure from South Kazakstan, particularly from the religious right in Zhambul and Shymkent, who hold that these are 'traditions' and part of the 'Kazak way of life', the law will not be enforced by the Procurator's Office (*Prokuratura*) at local level in the countryside. According to my respondent, a deal was struck at government level and informal instructions issued to the *Prokuratura* not to proceed with cases. In my interviews with local *Prokuratura* officials in my fieldwork areas, I was unable to obtain any further information – except that no such cases had been brought or were pending. Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain access to the library of the Parliament, where the proceedings of the debates on the new Codes are held. The discussion in Chapters 5 and 6 on the establishment of the new private (family) farms examines another aspect of the tension between the new emphasis on the family and individual rights.

On the other hand, as Pilkington (1995) notes with reference to a parallel phenomenon in post-Soviet Russia, the demise of the monopoly of the CPSU and Marxist-Leninist ideology has also permitted alternative sites of discourse generation. Ideologies and representations of gender are now being produced, not by a single party, but by different political groupings and parts of civil society, the mass media and non-governmental organisations. Globalisation means that, even in isolated rural communities, TV now provides access to such 'diverse' representations of gender as North and Latin American soap operas, Hollywood films, advertising and pornographic movies. Gender discourse is therefore, more than ever, a contested space. In this sense, 'the fragmentation of the sites of discourse generation is both potentially liberating, in that it opens up possibilities for alternative voices to be heard and potentially enslaving, in that it may shore-up prejudices and result in the insidious refixing of gender identities in a highly limiting way' (ibid: 161).

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[109] For a review of gender analyses of legislation in Kazakstan, see the chapters in 'Women and the Law', Section 2 of the *Republic of Kazakhstan Report on the Status of Women, 1997.*

In the new Kazakstan, state-discourse itself is not monolithic or unilinear, but part of an ongoing process of social and political dialogue and hence punctuated by contradictions. To my knowledge, no in-depth studies have as yet been conducted on shifts in state gender discourse since independence in Kazakstan, as they have for Russia[110]. However, although the main thrust of state-building discourse is marked by the gender asymmetry explored above, my own reading of various official and media sources suggests that the picture is more complicated. As Reef Altoma (1994: 164) points out in her study of islamisation in Kazakstan, the leadership is trying to mould the identity of independent Kazakstan into a modern, multi-ethnic state, and must therefore steer a complicated course between the religious and the secular, the ethnic and the multi-ethnic, East and West. It is not surprising, therefore, that discourse on gender relations sometimes gives mixed messages, as in an interview between President Nazarbaev and a group of women deputies, which I saw on television early in my second trip to Kazakstan[111]. Although ostensibly a dialogue, the meeting took the form of a monologue, almost a harangue by the President, who was urging the deputies to be 'objective' and give their wholehearted support to the government reform programme, since 'there was no alternative'. There was a need for strategic policy, to develop the state and the economy and to increase democracy. After appealing to the women in their 'primary roles as homemakers' and stressing their consciousness of social issues, he moved on to 'big politics', specifically the market economy. The women deputies had forgotten how they used to stand in queues before, he said. The market economy was a normal economy. It gave people the opportunity to work in the job they wanted and where they wanted. Women had to work, since there were many pensioners who needed to be provided for by the working population. What I found particularly striking in this 'discussion' were the contradictions : between the references to increasing democracy and the appeal to the women politicians first and foremost in their domestic roles as homemakers, between the 'female' sphere of social issues and the implicitly male sphere of 'big politics'; and then, conversely, between the emphasis on homemaking and the stress on women as workers, helping to maintain an ageing population. Clearly, the common factor here is the primary identification of women with the domestic sphere, in terms of the home and the caring role associated with it. However, the question is, how far can this 'domestic' role be expanded into the public sphere, into work and politics? The women deputies already occupied a space in this public world. What was at stake in this instance was the boundaries of their participation. And here, what was most striking was the absence of the voices of the women themselves. In all ten minutes of the report, not a single woman was heard. The viewer discovered absolutely nothing about the deputies' own views or (possibly gendered) critiques of government policies.

This raises the question of the extent to which gendered critiques of the current nation-building discourse can be voiced. The emergence, since 1991, of a broad spectrum of

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[110] For Russia, see Pilkington (1995). One possible framework for analysis in a Kazakstani context is suggested by Evgeny Zhovtis' (1999) work on freedom of association in Kazakstan, which identifies three stages in the democratisation process: 1991-94, when the government, in response to (perceived) international pressure was most open to the demands for democratization and observation of human rights; 1994-1996, the beginning of a retrenchment from earlier commitments; and 1997-8, marking the beginning of more open repression. See Zhovtis, E. (1999) It would be interesting to see how far this framework applies to gender discourse.

[111] *Subbota* on Channel 31 at 8.30 pm on 2nd November 1996. Fieldnotes, Almaty, November 1996.

women's organisations is a phenomenon which deserves a more detailed analysis than I can present here and merits further research[112]. Briefly, there would seem to be two challenges to the gendered construction of the new polity. On the one hand, women are challenging the patriarchal prejudices which have excluded them from full participation in the public sphere, and are demanding that the public sphere be fully opened to them. A number of the new women's organisations are contesting the idea that the revived or reinvented traditions of nomadic society can serve as a model for gender relations in the present, and calling for gender discourse to be placed firmly in its current context, in other words, for attention to be paid to the gendered impact of the current economic and political changes and for gender issues to be explicitly incorporated into state policy. Another approach is to 'reclaim' the traditionalist rhetoric, by transforming the association of women with the private sphere and the accompanying cultural and spiritual identity, into a springboard or platform for women's action in the public sphere. One example of this is the islamic women's organisation mentioned above. Another is the use of 'traditional' symbols in the discourse of secular organisations, such as the umbrella organisation, 'Shiragin'. In the words of one of its founders, it's name, which comes from the Kazak word for 'fire' was chosen because 'women are fire for the nation, as they are fire for the lamp'[113]. The example of this organisation is an interesting one, because it could be said to use both forms of challenge in different circumstances: whilst its name gives it a moral legitimacy within the new 'traditionalist' discourse, many of its members campaign on a platform that would be more familiar in a Western feminist context. This points to the way in which women's organisations, like the state and nation, are themselves pursuing a quest for identity, which draws on both trans-national and traditional images.

How representative are such groups and what impact are they having on policy? One argument is that they represent a drop in the ocean and that the lack of a coherent women's movement in Kazakstan and Central Asia as a whole is a sign of women's victimization or passivity (Akiner, 1997). Although they point to resistance to the new traditionalist ideology in terms of individual choices in lifestyles or careers – such as distancing from kin networks to lead an independent existence or postponing marriage - these are analysed in terms of 'non-resistance' or 'passivity'. However, as Scott (1985) demonstrated in his study on peasant resistance in rural Malaysia, 'the existence of those who seem not to rebel is a warren of minute, individual, autonomous tactics and strategies which counter and inflect the visible facts of overall domination, and whose purposes and calculations, desires and choices, resist any simple division into the political and the apolitical'. A clearer idea of how gender discourse is being contested comes from an examination of such 'apolitical' forms of resistance, particularly as regards how the processes of revival or reinvention of traditions are being conducted at local level. This will be examined more fully Chapters 5, 6 and 7. However, at macro level, the formal, jural and legal aspects of gender relations, at least, are

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[112] Studies available when I conducted my field research were Seitova, 'The Formation of the Women's Movement in Kazakstan. Women's NGOs' in *The Republic of Kazakstan Report on the Status of Women*, (1997: 25-32); Bauer, Boschmann and Green (1997: 83 – 87); Herman, Johnson and Estes, (1996: 5-8). NGOs have recently been the object of more detailed research. See for example Berg's (2004) study on women's informal networks and nongovernmental organisations in Uzbekistan.

[113] Fieldnotes, Almaty, 5.11.96.

being decided in male-dominated public sphere, where the question of women's access to it is, at best, contested and, at worst, under threat in Kazakstan[114].

This discussion has highlighted two main aspects of national identity building: the renovation of archaic forms and the inversion of Soviet ideologies. The revaluing of traditional identities in the public sphere, has also entailed a reappraisal of gender relations in nomadic society (where women were already emancipated, and customs were more moral, ethical and spiritual and a better basis for the development of a modern society, rooted in tradition). However just as, in Soviet period, gender was a shorthand for other issues, here again, but in a mirror-image, gender symbolises the value of the traditional way of life but gender relations themselves are not really investigated or examined. Similarly, the permeability to Western (outside) ideas, has not extended to feminist ideas on gender relations. In part, this is due to the dominance of particular economistic discourses in the development process, which also have direct implications for the construction of gender domains. It is this that I shall go on to explore in the next section.

II. The Framing of (Economic) Development

The second of Kazakstan's two strategic goals over the past decade has been to begin to carry through the requisite wide-ranging social, political and economic reforms to enable the 'transition' from the Soviet political and economic system to a 'new and completely different one' (Nazarbaev, 1998: 13). As I shall argue in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, this 'new and completely different' society may not in fact fit the blueprint set out by those planning reform. The concept of 'transition', which has now become so widespread as to seem natural or inevitable is actually very slippery (Hann, 1994; Humphrey, 1995). Not only is its future goal unclear and disputed by the various actors involved, but moves, strategies and values may not obviously be taking a single direction at all (Humphrey, ibid: 10). However, as widely applied in the language of the Kazakstani government and the international donor institutions and agencies assisting with the definition and implementation of its development strategy, the concept of 'transition' can be equated with a radical shift, at state level, from the Soviet to a 'Western' model of development.

Who is framing development?

Although Kazakstan has been attempting to choose a development path 'on the basis of [its] history and specific circumstances' it is also confronting 'a time of growing globalisation and increasing interdependence, when powerful external forces will inevitably play a considerable role in deciding [its] future' (Nazarbaev, 1998). With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Kazakstan as an independent state, the country effectively found itself propelled into the global economic system and confronted with the need to survive within it. In particular, faced with the waning of subsidies from Russia, the government turned for loans to international institutions, such as the IMF and the World

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[114] For statistics on women's representation in government and parliament see for example the Kazakstan Section in Women 2000, International Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. Available online at http://www.ihf-hr.org/appeals/0011096.htm. Last accessed from the World Wide Web in 2003.

Bank and an unprecedented wave of other donor and aid organisations also appeared on the development scene. In return for loans and development aid, pressure was put on the government to follow prescriptions for macro-economic stabilisation, and to step up its structural reform efforts, particularly in the area of privatisation and market reform (Kaser, 1997: 9). One of the senses in which we can speak of a shift to a 'western' model of development is therefore the new phenomenon of the involvement of external agencies, in shaping the country's development strategy[115].

The importance of considering a wide range of actors in the west as well as the east when studying the 'transition' has been underlined by Steven Sampson (1996: 121), who argues that development in the former socialist countries is taking the form of a series of 'encounters' at different levels between the former communist East and the capitalist West: at an abstract level, encounters of symbols, ideologies and models; at a concrete level, encounters between institutions, individuals and communities and a broad range of international development agencies, financial institutions and NGOs. Action and interaction is taking place at various levels, from macro-level policy initiatives down to encounters at grassroots level between local communities and western practitioners (of whom I was of course one)[116].

Indeed, this aspect of the framing of development in Kazakstan is difficult to ignore. During my pilot visit in February 1996, I was immediately struck by the number and range of different development agencies present in the country, ranging from what I term the 'major players' to a variety of smaller organisations. The first category included the international lending and multilateral organisations. Kazakstan joined the IMF in July 1992 and by 1997 had received $619 in aid (Kaser, 1997). Substantial capital had also been put in by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Kazakstan also became a member of the United Nations in March 1992 and shortly afterwards joined most of the UN development agencies, including UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNDP and WHO. A partnership and cooperation agreement was signed with the EU in 1995 and was the foundation for the TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Community of Independent States and Mongolia) programme. The major players also included a range of bilateral donors, such as the American agency, USAID, the German GTZ and the British Know How Fund. The second category included NGOs and consultancies, often subcontracting for the first and working on particular projects. I conducted interviews and participant observation in a number of these, primarily those directly involved in agriculture or rural development projects, including HIVOS, VOCA, Winrock International, Mercy Corps and the Counterpart Consortium.

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[115] The interesting question of the 'new' encounter between Kazakstan, as an independent state, and Russia and the other members of the CIS which were formerly part of the Soviet Union, falls beyond the scope of this thesis and will not be addressed in detail. Although both Russia and Russian ethnicity continued to be important markers of identity at local level in my research communities, the most striking feature of the macro level framing of development during the period I conducted my research was the new hegemony of Western models.

[116] See also the chapters by Verdery, Hann, Humphrey, Sampson and Mandel in Hann (2002).

It is important to note that these various development actors had different agendas and varying possibilities for influencing the direction of change[117]. An outline of their various development aims and priorities in Kazakstan, and how they have shifted since 1996, is appended and will be discussed further below. In addition, as I explored in the previous section of this chapter, the frameworks they propose are negotiated with the Kazakstani authorities, which have their own, sometimes different, reform agenda[118]. However, we can speak of the existence of a dominant development discourse, which has strongly influenced the direction of reform in Kazakstan and other former socialist countries (Griffin, 2000; Sievers, 2003).

The ideologies and aims driving (economic) development policies

Development as the running of an efficient market economy

When I began my fieldwork in 1996, a particular model of development was being advocated to the new independent states by the international community. In effect, Kazakstan had emerged as independent power at a specific conjuncture, when the collapse of the USSR and its alternative model of modernisation and the rise of a neo-liberal model of capitalism derived from the Reagan and Thatcher projects of the 1980s had produced a new development paradigm (Hettne, 1994; Rondinelli, 1993; Hewitt, 2000; Kohler, 1995; Thomas, 2000; Shlapentokh, 1995). Its contours were succinctly outlined by World Bank representative, Sir William Ryrie, in an address in 1996. After referring to the 'bankruptcy' of the previous consensus on state-led development projects, based on state ownership of the means of production and state control of the economy, he pointed to a 'new, remarkably wide and strong consensus in favour of market-based policies, opening the economy up to competition, internal and external, while maintaining monetary stability'. According to this paradigm, often referred to as the 'Washington consensus', the best measure of development is high economic growth over a substantial period of time; this could best be achieved by introducing a market system which, provided markets were flexible enough and allowed to work freely, would automatically bring positive development results. In other words, development had become synonymous with the running of an efficient market economy and this was presented as a pragmatic rather than an ideological approach. It was quite simply, 'the common core of wisdom embraced by all serious economists' (Ryrie, 1996: 3-5). However, despite its seeming 'pragmatism' or 'neutrality', this model *is* in fact driven by a particular definition and ideology of development, which has had a significant impact on the way social, including gender, issues have been incorporated in policies and interventions.

Development as a transition to western systems

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[117] Contradictory tendencies on the donor/international NGO scene in Kazakstan were analysed in a report for UK NGO INTRAC (Sinclair 1996) which pointed to a 'remarkable American dominance of the NGO scene, with a resulting focus on legal, electoral, human rights and environmental issues, and little focus on poverty and socio-economic change.' See also Mandel (2002b).

[118] See for example Michael Kaser's (1997) analysis of the economies of Kazakstan and Uzbekistan, where he highlights the two states' resistance to the 'shock therapy' model promulgated by the IMF, particularly their concern to maintain a strong role for the state in the economy and to curb social and economic differentiation.

Although there is a consensus that development is the running of an efficient market economy, the diagnosis of how this is to be achieved varies according to the categorisation of the country involved. Kazakstan, like Russia and the other former Soviet Republics in Central Asia, has been classed as one of the specific group of 'transition' countries or often (sic) economies.

A key feature of the new framing of development in the post-socialist countries is the tendency to cast the process in terms of a 'transition' to western systems, with flows or transfers of symbolic, practical, technical and human resources taking place from west to east, but not vice-versa. This is connected with the existing constructions of the Eastern bloc in opposition to the West and the power relations intrinsic to this relationship (Kurti, 1996). There was a widespread perception that the West had 'won' the cold war and that the dissolution of the former eastern bloc was intrinsically connected with the failure of its model of modernisation, which needed to be 'corrected' by embracing the development model of the 'advanced industrial nations'[119]. This has involved the latter making an effort to 'modernise' the east and 'integrate' the former state socialist countries into existing economic and political frameworks, through a gamut of aid programmes aimed at helping them achieve 'privatisation', 'agricultural reform', 'higher-education restructuring', 'democratic institutions', 'legal reform' and 'a developed civil society' (Sampson, 1992). For their part, the governments of the former communist states were to adopt western models of development by implementing far-reaching economic and political reforms and encouraging their populations to change their economic and political culture to embrace market and democratic ideas and practices.

The language of development as the wholesale adoption of western models permeates the documentation produced by governments and development agencies to the extent that it becomes largely a taken-for-granted frame of reference. The way it has operated in a Kazakstani context is summed up in a caustic critique by former aid worker, Matt Bivens, (1997: 74) describing a planned but never filmed episode of a USAID-sponsored soap opera 'Seekers of Happiness': 'Two fictional families, one Russian and one Kazak, thrown together by circumstances, become partners and together achieve a certain level of economic security. Along the way, privatisation is shown in a glowing light. One episode merits a fuller description: The Kazak and Russian families decide to build a simple house but can't figure out how. Suddenly a hot air balloon soars into view. The balloon has 'Soros Foundation' emblazoned on it. It lands. Americans leap out of the basket, build the house, and sail away. The Kazakstanis wave and cheer.'[120]

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[119] Academic debate on the nature of Soviet modernisation was a focus of 'sovietology'. One set of explanations (Habermas) saw the Soviet model as a distinctive version of modernity, and argued that both western and soviet systems failed to realise the full potential of modernity, since the west was dominated by the capitalist economy and the East by the bureaucratic state. Another set of theories (Kerr; Talcott-Parsons) argued that the Soviet model was not a different modernity, but a more backward or less thorough modernisation. It is largely this model, put forward after the collapse of the USSR by political science theorists such as Richard Sakwa which has been taken up by the international community. Sakwa, for instance, has categorised the Soviet experience as one of 'mismodernisation', with societies outwardly having the institutions associated with democratic societies, but actually dominated by various 'traditional' forms of kinship and personal ties.

[120] See Mandel (2002a) for an analysis of the use of soap opera in western development strategy in Kazakstan.

This description highlights a number of the key elements of the development model espoused by government and donor agencies in Kazakstan:

1) development has been primarily presented as a matter of achieving macro-economic security through infrastructural and market reform;
2) the former, Soviet techniques or know-how are seen as defunct or defective and cannot be relied upon in order to build a new and modern 'home' (or nation);
3) implicitly, ethnic traditions or identities (in this case Kazak and Russian) are a potential obstacle or source of discord and insecurity, which need to be counterbalanced by the adoption of a 'new' outlook, skills and sense of working towards a common goal;
4) external help is needed, in the form of a quick transfer of models and resources: it is assumed that western models or systems – or an idealised representation of how they function – are more 'efficient' than their Kazakstani counterparts, and can simply be transposed to the new location.
5) aid comes (in this case literally) 'top down', apparently with no attempt to assess local conditions, still less to discuss what kind of 'home' the local families might wish to build. None of the American experts conduct a social or cultural impact study, still less a gendered assessment of which features the women and men might find most desirable in their new home. In this sense, aid is primarily technical, rather than human, development.

Transition not development

As this critique suggests, the other key feature of the development paradigm being applied in Kazakstan is its definition of development. My findings are in keeping with a recent review of the period from 1991 to 2000, which highlights that, rather than adopting a people-centred view of the process, i.e. as one that increases people's abilities to achieve their potential and pursue a life of their choice, the Kazakstani government and majority of aid agencies adopted an older model, which focused more narrowly on 'commodity-based development' (Griffin, 2000: 251). With the notable exception of the UNDP and a number of the smaller players, who were operating with broader definitions, development was being defined primarily in terms of the creation of market economy, macro-economic stabilisation and investment. This narrow definition of development had a significant impact on the types of programmes and projects being implemented, as well as on the way social and gender issues were addressed. Four aspects were particularly salient:

First, this framing of development prioritised economic issues, with social impacts and social policy relegated to the margins. Macro-economic stabilisation and market reform were seen as 'neutral' or 'technical' matters, which were separate from, and given priority over, social aspects of reform. The assumption behind those social-sector programmes which did exist was that there was a need to 'ease the human and social impacts caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union' rather than to investigate the possible or actual impact of 'transition' policies themselves. This was reflected in the fact that (again, with the exception of UNDP), very few social impact studies were being conducted in connection with development policies, programmes and individual projects. However, as other analysts have suggested, the

'transition' model *does* espouse particular social and political values (state ownership is in principle bad, private enterprise is the source not only of wealth but also of virtue and the individual is the essential unit of polity)(Humphrey, 1995: 9). The logic of the 'transition' framework therefore required that 'excessive' government intervention in the economy be removed, which entailed moving away from the socialist development model by drastically reducing public investment and expenditure in social sector areas such as education, health and public services. It will be recalled that one of the explicit objectives of the Soviet social development model was to help women accommodate reproductive and productive labour. In this way, social and gender issues effectively became invisible but nevertheless were central to the (economic) development policies being pursued in Kazakstan, which were radically changing the relationship between public and private spheres.

Second, the 'transition' framework prioritised macro-level issues. The overwhelming majority of aid initiatives focused on reform of legislation, high-level advice and consultancy with government, with relatively few programmes focusing on micro-level projects or projects outside the Almaty region, where actual social impacts might have been more evident.

The extent to which 'transition' should be considered as a continuation of the general policies flowing from the Washington and post-Washington consensus or as a specific or qualitatively different model is a moot point. On the one hand, similar critiques to those outlined above can also be levelled at structural adjustment and other policies applied by the international financial institutions and donors elsewhere. Current development interventions across the world are premised on the view that countries are (or should be) moving towards Western models of market economy and democracy. These interventions have also been widely critiqued for prioritising economic over human and social, including gender, aspects of development. On the other hand, in my fieldwork with donor organisations and international NGOs I found that the term 'transition' had particular resonance for many people, both in terms of the framework in which they operated and their own ideas about development practice and priorities on the ground. As illustrated in organisations' documentation, 'transition' served to classify Kazakstan and other post-socialist economies comparatively in the global arena and to highlight the specific kinds of policy prescriptions that were felt to be most appropriate there. At another level, many individual programme and project managers had previously worked in 'development' in other regions such as Africa, Asia or Latin America. For them, the term 'transition' operated as a means of counter-pointing differences between post-socialist Kazakstan and these other regions. At both levels, a distinction was commonly drawn between 'transition' and 'development' countries and concerns, which, I argue, has had a specific impact on the way gender issues have been addressed by the donor community in Kazakstan. The diagnosis of government and agencies was that the 'transition' economies were facing three main challenges:

1) Transition – creation of a market-based economy, with functioning firms, markets and financial systems.
2) Stabilisation – restoration of macro-economic stability in terms of inflation, exchange rates and interest rates.
3) Development – improvement of 'quality of life' as measured, for example, by per capita income and the state of the physical environment (ref).

Although the three concepts were closely interconnected, 'transition' was considered to be the key. At the end of this 'transition' process, it was believed that these countries 'would have similar concerns to established market-based states and therefore a range of 'development issues' did not need to be debated since they were of less importance' (Gelb, 1996). These 'development issues' included other, redistributive measures of social well-being, such as life-expectancy, literacy, school-enrolment, equality of income distribution or the liberation of women, which 'were not to overshadow the basic macro-economic objectives' (Ryrie, 1996).

Fourth, as well as this distinction between 'transition' and 'developing' countries, the framing of development priorities in the various New Independent States depended on where specific countries were positioned – and positioned themselves – within the group of 'transitional economies', which was in turn connected with issues of power and strategic interests. For example, from the outset, the American aid organisation USAID categorised the various states differently and tailored its policies accordingly, taking account of their resources, national policies and priorities and the perception of probable returns on investment. The resulting differences in emphasis emerge clearly from a comparison between the strategies implemented by USAID in Kazakstan and neighbouring Kyrgyzstan:

Kazakstan is the largest recipient of US aid in Central Asia. It is classed as a 'resource-rich country with considerable trade and investment opportunities,' which 'has made considerable progress towards a market economy' and 'actively promotes Western trade, investment and economic support'. Its size and location make it 'a key player in shaping the post-Soviet political and economic order'. US national interests in Kazakstan are therefore 'both commercial and strategic' and development aid has focused predominantly on macro-level structural reform, first privatisation, then 'establishing a transparent, consistent legal and regulatory environment to maintain and expand foreign investment'. In particular, as described in Chapter 1, much effort has gone into restructuring the potentially very remunerative energy sector (USAID, 1996, 1998a).

Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, is described as a small and poor and low-income country, significant for its vocal commitment to democracy and market reform and its role as an example for the region (USAID, 1998b). Here US development aid has focused on macro-level structural reform and economic growth, but also to a greater extent on fostering civil society, 'livelihoods', small and medium enterprise development, primary health care and particularly poverty alleviation.

Development agencies' priorities are determined in liaison with governments and are influenced by the latters' strategic positioning on the development spectrum. The President of Kazakstan has been strongly committed to the 'market development' model promulgated by the 'major players'. Clearly, this has a strong, strategic component - Kazakstan was able to trade on its nuclear capability and its potential as a major gas and oil exporter to negotiate its position on the world stage. As described earlier, the government presentation of Kazakstan has been of a 'snow-leopard' economy, poised for economic take-off and in the vanguard of the Central Asia region. Stipulating that I should maintain his anonymity, a disgruntled

project contractor working on a micro-level project for USAID told me that neither the Kazakstani nor the US government had much interest in the smaller programmes dealing with agriculture and micro-enterprise. He put this down to a confluence of interests to focus on high-level or prestige projects, such as reform of the energy sector or the Aral Sea. In his view, the Kazakstani government was 'betting on the development of natural resources' and 'felt it could afford to wait before implementing micro-level development programmes'.[121] This was very different from neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, which was presenting itself as a country in need of 'development' assistance[122].

The invisibility of gender: results of fieldwork with development agencies and NGOs

All these aspects: the definitions of development as 'transition' and positioning of Kazakstan within the 'transition' spectrum, together with the accompanying focus on a quick technical 'fix' through importing western models and the prioritisation of macro over micro and, economic over social, issues, were having a considerable effect on how gender was – or rather was not – being incorporated into development planning, implementation and monitoring.

My initial aim was to examine how gender was being incorporated into rural development initiatives by looking at programs or individual projects with a specific women in development or gender and development component. To go back to Sampson's (1996) idea of an encounter between West and East, I thought it would be interesting to look at the interface between projects' gender ideologies and practices and local ones, and to examine how approaches used elsewhere were being adapted in post-Soviet context. However, in 1996, I was unable to pursue this objective, since no programs with a specific gender component were being implemented in the rural/agricultural sector. More generally, I found that, although most organisations did have a gender and development or women in development strategy, which was being applied in programmes elsewhere, it was not being applied in Kazakstan[123]. The four organisations whose frameworks and activities I studied most closely were the World Bank, EU/TACIS, USAID and UNDP.

At that time, the strategy of the World Bank was to seek to integrate gender into all policy and operational work and a WID Advisory Board had been established for this purpose

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[121] Interview with VOCA representative, Almaty, 24.6.97.
[122] For a more detailed exposition of the two states' different approaches to seeking foreign aid and investment, see for example, Brill Olcott (1996).
[123] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to compare the extent to which these gender strategies and programmes are actually implemented in other areas of the world. However, it should be pointed out that, although these organisations are theoretically concerned about integrating gender issues into the mainstream of their work, there have been widespread critiques as to how far this is so. See, for example, for the World Bank, Caroline Moser et al. 'Mainstreaming Gender and Development in the World Bank: Progress and Recommendations, 1999, World Bank and, with a specific focus on the agricultural sector, Mario Zappacosta and Elisa Montresor, 'The World Bank's View on Women in Agricultural Projects: From 'Women in Development' to 'Gender and Development', Paper presented at the XVI Congress of the European Society of Rural Sociology, Working Group 16: Women, Markets and Agriculture, Prague, 31 July – 4 August 1995.

within the institution[124]. However, in 1996 the Europe and Central Asia Region did not have a gender unit and the representatives I interviewed were not au fait with gender considerations At that time, neither specific gender assessment of projects nor specific gender-oriented projects were being implemented or planned.

Similarly, gender equality was part and parcel of EU policies and programs, with specific programmes for women and rural development being implemented elsewhere, both in the EU member states and in developing countries. In 1995, the European Commission had accepted a resolution on gender issues in development, according to which women's and men's roles were to be taken into account in micro, meso and macro policies, including structural adjustment policies. In 1996, it had also adopted a gender mainstreaming approach, which was to lead to the incorporation of equal opportunities into all EU policies and activities (Van Steveren, 2001)[125]. However, from interviews with EU representatives it emerged that social and cultural, including gender issues, were not seen as a priority and were not taken into account in programme or project design or monitoring[126].

USAID had set up an Office of Women in Development in 1974, to help ensure that women participated fully and benefited equally from US overseas development assistance. Goals included enhancing the economic status of women throughout the developing world, expanding educational opportunities for girls, improving women's legal and property rights and increasing their participation in governance and civil society. By 1996, the office was moving beyond its earlier emphasis on women-centred projects to a broader approach of integrating gender throughout the agency's regional and country programs and projects. The strategic objectives of the new Gender Plan of Action announced in March that year were to reflect the central role of women in development through better data collection and analysis and revision of personnel policies. USAID project development and program officers were to have experience of gender issues, new guidelines were issued for grantees and contractors to require demonstration of abilities to address gender issues, and each mission was to review and revise 'mission orders' to ensure that gender issues are considered at all appropriate points in the process of planning, achieving and evaluating program results. However, although USAID had been active in Kazakstan since 1992, a preliminary assessment of gender considerations was only conducted in December 1996 and highlighted that, although there were elements in the mission's programme which 'contributed to WID goals and partially addressed WID concerns', gender had not been mainstreamed across the portfolio.

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[124] For a more detailed analysis of the World Bank's changing approach to women/gender and development over the period from 1975 to 1995, see the citations above.

[125] For a detailed exposition of the EU's resolutions and critiques of them by various non-governmental organisations, see http://www.aprodev.net/genderpol.htm Last accessed 9.4.2004.

[126] Similar conclusions were reached in a position paper produced on the EU TACIS programme for the APRODEV organisation, which concluded that emphasis had been placed on strengthening the economic system and promoting the evolution towards a market-oriented society. Whilst these were important goals, there was no "coherent strategy that describes how these actions will contribute to the *social* development of the societies in question. [...] nor do the current proposals include any provision to promote an equitable distribution of the benefits of economic development" (Metz,1999). An overview of the EU's relations with Kazakstan is available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/kazakhstan/intro/index.htm. Last accessed from World Wide Web on 8.4.2004.

Even the UNDP, whose sustainable human development paradigm had gender equality as one of its cornerstones, alongside poverty reduction, environmental regeneration and sustainable livelihoods, and which considered women's empowerment as critical for the development process, was only just initiating a WID/GAD programme in Kazakstan 1996, despite being active in the country since the beginning of the decade.

My research suggested several specific reasons for this failure to introduce a systematic gender framework in Kazakstan. First, as research has highlighted elsewhere, gender tends to be excluded where development is defined in terms of economic or technical assistance (Goldey, et al, 1996). Second, to go back to the distinction drawn between 'transition' and 'development', gender issues were categorised as one of the range of 'development' concerns which did not need to be addressed in connection with transition countries. This is explicitly stated in USAID's own description of its regional WID activities: 'The USAID technical assistance portfolio in Central Asia is focused around three strategic assistance areas: 1) Market Transition 2) Democratic Transition and 3) Social Sector Transition. As a program geared towards countries in transition, the portfolio is not designed to include a WID-specific program nor more long-term WID-style activities, such as girls education, addressed in developing country programs' (Herman, et al 1996). As a transition economy, the country was seen as having a 'positive gender relations legacy' from the Soviet period: looking at indicators such as female education and labour-force participation, the conclusion was that no interventions would be necessary in this area. This assessment seemed to rely on Soviet quantitative data at face value, without looking at more nuanced critiques of gender assymetries under the Soviet system. It was also based on the assumption that this past situation would continue or improve under the influence of transition policies and that there was no need to evaluate or ease the impact of market and social reforms themselves[127]. The conceptualisation of transition as a short-term, technical 'fix' also contributed to the failure to mainstream gender issues[128].

However, in counterpoint, many of the same agencies did apply gender frameworks and set up GAD/WID projects much earlier in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. For example, UNDP had already set up a Gender Bureau and there were a number of initiatives to encourage women's NGOs, including in rural areas of the country. This was partly connected with Kyrgyzstan's positioning on the spectrum of 'transition countries' as a poor country, in need of more classic 'development' assistance. In other words, gender issues were being addressed in relation to poverty reduction initiatives but not in relation to macro-economic or stabilisation policies. The fact that agencies – at least initially – focused their work in the capital also contributed to the lack of poverty-related interventions. Few resources were made available to conduct base-line surveys in other parts of the country, especially in rural areas, where more 'poverty oriented' projects would have been appropriate. In this connection, it is interesting that the

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[127] A similar argument was made by the World Bank, which concluded that most countries in Europe and Central Asia were relatively well endowed, for their income levels, with physical and human capital and that the most serious constraints on growth and poverty reduction lay in policies and institutions that distorted the framework for economic decision-making.

[128] For example, the USAID assessment team concluded that, since 'the Mission [had] given priority to responding to start up and transition challenges, there [had] not been sufficient time to consider how the appropriate integration of gender across the entire portfolio could help the mission to enhance the impact of its assistance program' (Herman, Johnson and Estes, 1996).

only agency to have started to conduct 'development' work in Kazakstan in 1996 was UNDP, which was operating with a broad conceptualisation of human development. Their programme focused on two specific areas of the country (Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk), which had suffered major environmental catastrophe and degradation and in February 1996, three pilot projects with WID aspects were being planned there. The Government had acknowledged the extremely high levels of poverty and infant mortality in these 'development' areas, and that they required different kinds of intervention.

Therefore, although there was no systematic gender framework, some sectors had more of a gender component than others. In Kazakstan, projects with explicit gender components were markedly absent in the economic, energy, transport and agricultural sectors, and those that did exist were concentrated in the democracy/civil society and micro-enterprise/micro-credit sectors. In both sectors, women appeared to be playing an active part, both as activists in the NGOs supported by development agencies and as beneficiaries of credit. However, the lack of a systematic gender approach meant that a gender framework was not consistently reflected in the work of individual projects, as demonstrated in a number of interviews.

One example was D.A.I., which was conducting a project for the Asian Development Bank to study rural credit and savings and to develop mechanisms for distributing credit. Although the funding organisation was one of the few to have included a gender dimension in its strategy, together with a requirement for contractors to include gender in their projects, this was seen as a peripheral 'add-on' rather than an essential element. I was told that gender issues were 'something that has to be put in for the higher agencies, not a central aspect.' There appeared to be no monitoring by ADB of the way gender was actually included in the project. Neither the western project managers nor the local consultant who had designed the central study had been trained in gender analysis. In fact, this was one of the few projects to have commissioned a large-scale sociological study in rural areas, which had covered 200 rural households and 100 agricultural businesses, micro-businesses and farms in 12 oblasts and could have produced significant quantitative and qualitative data. However, the failure to take account of gender was reflected in the conceptualisation of their nationwide survey, which did not disaggregate the data by gender (ADB, 1997).

Another example was the Counterpart Consortium, a USAID contractor working to 'develop sustainable, effective, community based organisations which can have an effect on democratic transition and market economy'. The organisation had been working in Kazakstan since 1994 and had focused on training local trainers, empowering community organisations and giving money in the form of various types of grant. In an interview with the organisation's Regional Program Director, he began by giving his views as to why gender was not an issue that needed to be addressed as such in his work with NGOs in Central Asia, 'I never consider gender as an issue. Most organisations are started on a needs basis, by women'. He had worked in Poland for two and a half years and in Africa for two and a half years, and it was 'always women who were the first to reach for help'. This example raised a number of issues. Firstly, the organisation was not systematically using gender as a tool or concept in planning projects or assessing their impact and, again, the contractor was not ensuring that this was the case. Secondly, although women were undoubtedly actively involved in the Consortium's initiatives, the question of gender was being approached

primarily in terms of the numbers of women participating in projects. Thirdly, there was an unproven assumption that experience could be directly transposed from other contexts, in particular that women across the world were likely to initiate projects, as a result of their involvement and responsibility for family and community activities. Lastly, and more widely, the assumption was that gender issues would somehow look after themselves. Unfortunately, this was demonstrably not the case.

Shift in development policy after 1996

Already, in 1995, Kazakstan UNDP human development report had suggested the need to look beyond the growth paradigm, to see development in a wider perspective: 'to refocus transition concerns and hence development objectives, to improve human well-being and to accelerate human capital formation'. Looking beyond the economic and political perspective to the improvement or deterioration of quality of life, the organisation's 'disaggregation of data over regions by sex and ethnic origin had permitted the detection of large disparities in development concealed in the national statistics'. It had concluded that differences between the highest and least developed areas of the country were comparable to the difference between such countries as Paraguay and Nicaragua or Iran and Guatemala, and that there was disparity between North and South and urban and rural areas, linked to both ethnic composition and also gender disparities. In 1997, the UNDP went further, concluding that systemic reform in Kazakstan had been an economic, social and demographic disaster and that human development had 'gone into reverse'. Although the Government was making progress in achieving macro-economic stability, this was being achieved at the expense of state support for the social sphere: healthcare, childcare and education. According to the 1996 human development report, the gross domestic product in 1995 had been only 43.5% of its 1990 level, and life expectancy in the same period had fallen from 68.6 to 66.1 years. Kazakstan had moved down in rank, from fifty-third in 1992 to seventy-second in 1995 on the global human development index scale. The decline in social indicators was continuing, with rising unemployment and declining real wages and there had been a sharp rise in poverty, estimated to affect one third of the population. Rural areas had been particularly affected. Further, women and children had been hardest hit during the transition, unemployment in particular being gender skewed, with women accounting for two thirds of the hidden unemployed[129].

By this second year of my fieldwork, other organisations besides UNDP had also begun to conduct detailed social impact and gender studies. Notably, the report published by the Asian Development Bank (Bauer, Boschmann and Green, 1997) also concluded that the immediate result of restructuring in Kazakstan had been negative and that, although both men and women had been affected by the changes, the social and economic costs of transition were being borne, at least in the short term, primarily by women. Unemployment was weakening sectors which had primarily offered women employment. Deterioration of the social service sector had increased the burden of labour for women in the domestic sphere and directly impacted on the health and living standards of women and children. Weakening of the social

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[129] Data from UNDP, 1997: 85 and the Country Cooperation Framework for Kazakstan, 1997

safety net had impacted particularly on certain groups of women, including pensioners, single women with many children, and the unemployed.

As I pursued my fieldwork in 1997-1998, it seemed that the meanings of 'transition' and 'development' were increasingly being contested. Faced with worsening living conditions and disappointing project results, many of the larger organisations were beginning to talk about the need to include 'social issues' in their programmes. They were also increasingly using terms, such as 'poverty alleviation' and 'people-centred initiatives' from the lexicon of 'development'[130]. The feeling amongst respondents from donor organisations was that this shift was being contested by the Kazakstani government, which was still prioritising macro-level projects and for example, insisted on the use of the euphemism 'social vulnerability' instead of 'poverty'. As discussed above and in Chapter 1, the ability of the Kazak government to insulate itself from redistributive pressures and resist more human development-oriented and poverty-focused approaches can be linked with its capability to capitalise on oil revenues. However, by 1998, both government and donor organisation's descriptions of their strategic development priorities had undergone a significant sea change. Three facets of this shift in discourse were particularly significant with respect to my own research: a recognition of and commitment to take account of gender issues by at least some organisations, an acknowledgement of the specific problems facing rural areas and reference to 'people-centred' development.

Following the preliminary gender assessment in December 1996, which recommended that a long-term plan be developed to integrate gender considerations into appropriate strategies, programs and projects, USAID's calls to tender began to ask for gender to be taken specifically into account[131]. The report also called for a change in the existing reliance on a single women in development officer for the region as a whole, with the creation of a gender working group. The UNDP had already gone further in organisational terms. A Kazakstan Gender In Development Bureau was established under its auspices in December 1996, to act as a focal point for addressing the needs of women in Kazakhstan. As of 1998, the EU had made no similar moves.

More emphasis was also being placed on the specific development problems of rural areas. The Central Asia Second Reconnaissance Mission Report prepared for USAID in December 1997 highlighted that the organisation had 'no strategic goal or objective that [dealt] directly with agriculture, rural development or natural resource management' (USAID, 1997). In the Kazakstan 2030 strategy, the President also acknowledged that polarisation had been a

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[130] This analysis is supported by that of Griffin (2000).

[131] One call to tender for a major environment project specified that: 'Effectively taking into consideration the impact of gender in the environment sector will be important to the contractor's success in achieving results. There is no simple "recipe" for how to include gender considerations in natural and environmental programs. A general principle, though, is that to conserve and manage natural resources in a sustainable way and to ensure environmental protection both women and men must work together to maximize the opportunity for new ideas and solutions. Gender issues can be looked at on three levels; the policy level – what are the impacts of resource management decisions on women; the institutional level – what roles does gender play in social institutions effecting resource management; and the local level – how are men and women both involved with environmental issues. Each Offeror should describe in its proposal how it anticipates dealing with gender issues as an integrated part of its activities' (USAID, 2000).

marked feature of the relationship between urban and rural areas and that the gap was growing. There was a commitment to making rural areas a key target for further efforts towards market transformation and to give particular attention to resolving social and infrastructure problems. However, this document also highlighted the tensions implicit in this paradigm shift: alongside the new emphasis on social problems was the old emphasis that these problems 'could mainly be resolved through economic growth' and that 'help would only be targeted on the most needy groups'.

The same document also highlighted a more widespread limitation of any shift towards 'people-centred' development. Alongside the commitment to 'give peasants and rural dwellers the opportunity to take greater control over their lives and provide them with the means to do so' came the warning that there would be no change in the orientation of policy towards privatisation and market reform. Elsewhere in the document (Nazarbaev, 1998: 19-20) the government presented itself as an agent of change and the people as a problem. The 'mentality of several generations formed with Soviet values' needed to be transformed and people given a new 'world view' based on 'self-initiative' rather than 'dependency'.

Continuities with the Soviet Development Model

This highlights another significant aspect of the development framework being applied by the Kazakstani government and the major international players. On the surface, it appears to be a kind of antithesis of socialism. In this context, it may seem strange to talk about continuities with the Soviet development model. It is important to flag the novel ways in which the Kazak economy is now being inserted in global commodity circuits. However, the 'inversion' of discourse and 'export' of western models or systems masks a number of commonalities, relating to power, specifically, the way in which change is brought about and the space for local communities to decide on the goals and means of 'development'. Like the Soviet discourse of development before it, the 'transition' discourse is propelled by ideas about backwardness and modernity. Just as the relationship between the Russian centre and indigenous periphery was constructed in terms of the latter's 'backwardness' rather than economic and cultural difference, the relationship between the west and the post-communist east is being constructed in terms of hierarchy rather than partnership. Further, both Soviet and 'transition' development models tend to assume that change comes 'top-down' from the state and ignore ways in which people negotiate change and initiate their own.

This applies not only to models or ideologies but also often to more personal interactions. Participant observation in donor agencies and NGOs revealed a landscape of stereotypes and assumptions about culture and identity that bore a remarkable resemblance to the Soviet era categorisation of different ethnic groups, except that westerners had now replaced Russians at the top of the pyramid. Comments about the 'laziness' and 'lack of initiative' of ethnic Kazaks, opposed to the (relative) energy of Russians and the particular industriousness and entrepreneurship of ethnic Germans, were common currency. More generally, as in the above example, there was a tendency to equate Soviet culture with a kind of 'dependence mentality'. The question of where to place Kazakstani women and Kazak women in particular on this spectrum of 'advanced' and 'less advanced' groups was a fraught one. I found that projects and their individual representatives were caught up in paradoxical and

sometimes mutually exclusive assumptions, based on ideas about Islamic women versus ideas about making women central to development, i.e. that rural Kazak women, in particular, were 'passive' and would not participate and organise, versus the idea that women were good entrepreneurs, good targets for micro-credit programmes and the major actors in the voluntary sector. The lens for measuring outcomes seemed often to be the extent to which local women were able to articulate the 'right' position rather than the extent to which they could voice their own concerns.

The apparent shift in development priorities towards social, rural and people-oriented development was therefore a limited phenomenon. It was certainly not apparent in my rural fieldwork communities in 1997-1998, where Bivens' (1997) critique remained an apposite one. His example ended with the departure of the Soros experts. We did not see how the Russian and Kazak families reacted once the experts had flown away in their balloon, what they said about them, and whether they tried to change or adapt the house that had been built. However, to continue the metaphor, research on new architectural styles in Almaty showed that the full-scale '*zapadnyii remont*' (Western makeover) of old homes and the building of new villas modelled on 'Dallas-style' ranches was going hand in hand with the inclusion of local features[132]. In the following chapters I explore the framing of rural development in particular and how it has been experienced and shaped in my fieldwork communities and argue that local responses are in fact far more complex than the framework might suggest.

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[132] In his paper on 'Building Kazakstan' presented to the Anthropology in Post-Socialist Societies Workshop in June 1999, Victor Buchli pointed to a parallel 'Santa-Barbaraness' and localism in styles and living arrangements. Ethnic Kazaks' villas, in particular, were built to accommodate several generations and visiting kin and often had both 'Western' and 'Kazak' entertainment rooms, the latter with yurt forms and ethnic motifs, together with traditional Russian saunas (*banyas*).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Framing of Rural Development

'Privatization is the very basis of rural reform'
Yesimov (1995)

This chapter explores more specifically how current rural development policies in Kazakstan have been shaped in relation to the development model described in Chapter 3. I argue that the invisibility of gender in the overarching development model has been carried through into these policies and that the outcome is that the gendered aspects of agrarian reform have not been taken into account.

I. Rural development as privatisation

Current policy on rural development in Kazakstan and the other states of the former Soviet Union can be situated against the background of ongoing debate amongst both Western and Soviet analysts on ways to increase the efficiency of Soviet agriculture. At the end of the Gorbachev period, there was a consensus that the rural sector was experiencing major problems, but two competing diagnoses as to what they were and how to resolve them (Shanin, 1990). The first prioritised the structural and technical problems relating to the command economy, emphasised the relative productivity of private plots in relation to the state and collective farm system and recommended privatisation and market reform. The second emphasised the human dimension of agricultural production and proposed a broader conception of rural development, focusing on community participation. By the time Kazakstan became independent in 1991, it was the former approach which had come to dominate the policy of both government and external advisers on agricultural sector reform and which has been reinforced in the current context.[133]

As I suggested in the previous chapter, the relationship between donor organisations and government involves negotiation over goals and priorities. From my interviews with key informants in the Ministry of Agriculture, it was clear that farm restructuring and land reform were contentious issues and that there were divergences of opinion between government and foreign advisers and between central government and *oblast* and *rayon* levels. The issue of private ownership of agricultural land, in particular, has been bitterly disputed (Gleason, 1993; Werner, 1994; ADB, 1996a). Until 20th June 2003, when the new land code was finally passed, agricultural land could only be held under 99 year leaseholds. The new code, which introduces full private ownership, met with fierce opposition in the Kazak parliament (*Majlis*), where deputies questioned the very idea of private ownership of land, on the grounds that it was incompatible with Kazak nomadic tradition, and expressed fears that it would only benefit the wealthy[134]. Nevertheless, in contrast with neighbouring Uzbekistan, Kazakstan moved much further and faster towards the privatisation and structural reform agenda advocated by international organisations.

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[133] For more detailed analyses of agricultural reform in the USSR over this period, see for example, the contributions in Moskoff (ed.) (1990) *Perestroika in the Countryside.*
[134] 'Short-lived, but still a mutiny' The Economist, June 26th 2003.

Just as the overall development challenges facing the post-socialist countries have been defined in terms of the need to boost economic growth through 'transition' to market economy, rural development has been framed primarily in terms of the need to increase the efficiency of the agricultural sector, notably through land reform and restructuring state and collective farms. According to this rationale, pushed by the 'major' development players and largely espoused by the Kazak government, during the Soviet period, the agricultural sector of the economy was prevented from achieving its full potential because of the lack of market features, such as private ownership, or tenure, of land[135]. Following this logic, decollectivisation and the introduction of private ownership or tenure would give people working on the land a real stake in its production and hence lead to increased efficiency. Supporting evidence for this was the high yields on private plots, which consistently exceeded the yields of state and collective farms.

Accordingly, the Kazakstani government has framed rural development primarily in terms of market transformation of the agricultural sector. Agriculture reform has covered a number of different areas, including: land reform and farm restructuring; restructuring of supply, processing, marketing and distribution systems; restructuring of rural financial institutions; and restructuring of public administration in agriculture[136]. My own field research and analysis focused primarily on the restructuring of state and collective farms into private enterprises, particularly the redistribution of land and other assets. .

Description of the Farm Privatisation Process

In 1991, the 2120 state farms (*sovkhozy*), formed either during the Virgin Lands Campaign (1954-1960) or during the consolidation and irrigation projects of the 1960s, were the main farm structure in Kazakstan, together with around 430 collective farms (*kolkhozy*). The USSR law on Peasant Farms, adopted in 1990, already permitted those who so desired to take land and farm individually. In 1992, the new Kazakstani Government initiated a broader land reform and farm privatisation programme, under which the former structures would reorganise into new agricultural enterprises, either cooperative farms, joint stock companies or individual 'peasant' farms (*krestyanskie khozyaistva*). The government farm privatisation and restructuring programme focused mainly on state farms, although some collective farms were also re-structured and some state farms, mainly those with a research or educational role, were not to be privatised (ADB, 1996b: 25; Coulter, 1996: 4). By 1996, the farm privatisation process was held to be almost complete. In April of that year roughly 93% of the state farms had been re-registered as private entities (Gaynor, 1996). However, these quantitative indicators hid a much more complex picture.

At macro level, legislation on land reform and farm restructuring had evolved through various stages to reflect changing goals and policies. Reports on the agricultural sector

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[135] For a contrasting analysis in Uzbekistan, see Deniz Kandiyoti, Agrarian Reform, Gender and Land Rights in Uzbekistan, UNRISD, Geneva, 2002.

[136] For a (primarily technical) analysis of reforms across the whole sector, see for example World Bank (1994); ADB (1996b). A detailed analysis of the privatisation of distribution systems can be found in a series of reports conducted for USAID by the Carana Corporation in 1995.

commissioned by the Asian Development Bank state that no less than 20 significant pieces of legislation were published over the period from 1991-1995 and conclude that the legislative framework had 'evolved piecemeal rather than as a crafted design with a foreseen outcome' (ADB, 1996b: 25)[137]. This led to a general state of confusion and flux with regard to basic conceptions such as land ownership and the legal status of the new enterprises. At local level, this 'fuzziness' translated into particular areas of concern[138]. First, under the new Land Code, agricultural land was still defined as state property that could be held under temporary or permanent use rights. The Land Code also 'contained a long list of reasons why an individual could be deprived of land rights previously granted', including non payment of the land tax, using land for non-agricultural purposes or letting land lie fallow for three years (ADB, 1996b: 15). Moreover, it was local administrations which ruled on these issues. In these conditions, although state farm members were entitled to withdraw a share of land, many were anxious – and with reason – about the stability of their rights.

In addition, the process by which legislation was to be implemented in practice was not clearly defined. Crucially, there was no standard model of farm restructuring to serve as a basis for a comprehensive national restructuring program[139]. Both government and outside consultants recognised that rural privatisation had been an ad hoc process, with considerable latitude given to local authorities and individual farm directors in shaping reform. Again, at local level, this fluidity translated into particular concerns. Local power relations played a major role in determining how state farms restructured and who benefited. Geographical location and farming systems were also a key factor in shaping community strategies. The approach adopted in areas of steppe pastureland, where the main agricultural activity was semi-transhumant herding, or in areas of semi-arid cultivation, differed considerably from the strategies in areas of fertile, agricultural land. In the first, the main concern was not the division of land, but the redistribution of livestock and/or assets, although in some places people were reverting to pre-Soviet land claims through family lineages. In the second, the higher population density and relative scarcity of irrigated land, made land claims an explosive and divisive issue. With no standard, state-wide model of farm privatisation, local authorities and rural communities were largely responsible for deciding how to conduct the restructuring process[140]. Nevertheless, privatisation was mandated from above and local strategies were influenced by the changing macro-level policy environment. Analyses produced for western donor agencies identified three broad phases in rural reform between

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[137] A selected list of the key legislation governing land reform and farm privatisation is appended. See also Arkhipov (1997) for a detailed local source.

[138] The term 'fuzziness' was first used in a similar context by Verdery (1999) 'Fuzzy Property: Rights, Power and Identity in Transylvania's Decollectivization.

[139] The ACDI/Koch project described above represented one attempt to produce a replicable privatisation model for the dairy sector in Kazakstan. Although it had the backing of the *oblast* authorities, it was not pursued further. Contrastingly, in the Russian Federation, a model restructuring program was piloted in Nizhni Novgorod province, with international donor support, in 1993. See Wegren (1994).

[140] Although some issues will be touched upon, a detailed discussion of the relationship between central and local government and the latter's influence on the shaping of reform falls outside the scope of this thesis. Research in Russia and Uzbekistan has flagged the key role of local authorities, who are most closely involved in the day-to-day management of economic and agricultural policy, as well as the importance of the power and attitude of individual local officials (Perrotta, 1995: 6; Mearns, 1996: 13).

1991 and 1996, marked by increasing attempts on the part of the government to shape the privatisation process (World Bank, 1994: 37-39; ADB, 1996b: 25-26)[141].

Phase 1: 1990-1992

Under the 1990 USSR Law on Peasant Farms, those wishing to become private farmers were already entitled to leave state farms and create peasant (family) farms. This opportunity was consolidated after independence, in the Land Reform Law of 1991. At this stage, the process was governed entirely by local administrations and no particular limitations were set on land or asset quotas for independent farmers. This legislation was later criticised for tending to favour the established hierarchy, by providing an opportunity for more powerful individuals or cliques to 'grab' resources. The 1991 law also initiated the wider reorganisation of state farms into new private entities. The most common path for privatisation was a nominal change of ownership of state farms into cooperatives or joint stock companies, with no fundamental change in the property rights of workers or in management and organisation.

Phase 2: 1992 – 1994

In 1992, legislation was enacted to speed up the privatisation process and to develop a common – and more equitable – approach to the transfer of ownership. The key policy goal was to distribute land and asset shares to state farm employees, which they could then use to either form individual (family) farms, contribute to the capital stock of a joint stock company, co-operative or collective enterprise or sell or exchange with other shareholders. Every state farm worker was to be allotted the rights to an identifiable piece of land on the basis of a life-time, inheritable lease.

This reformed privatisation model involved the following steps:

- prior to privatisation, the State Committee for Privatisation assessed the value of the farm property, taking into account debt, inflation and depreciation and established a standard 'property share' (*imushchestvennyi pai*) for each member of the farm;

- similarly, a standard 'land share' (*zemel'nyi pai*) for each farm member was determined based on the total area of the farm and the number of farm members, taking into consideration land quality;

- farm management conducted an informal consultative process to try to establish a consensus on the structure of the new farming entity, and the allocation of property and land shares;

- a general meeting was held at which farm workers formally adopted the new form of farming entity, signed a foundation agreement, established bylaws, approved the allocation of land and property shares and elected a farm manager;

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[141] See the appendix on legislation on agrarian reform and farm restructuring.

- whatever farm structure was chosen, workers wishing to leave the farm and form independent or smaller farming units had the legal right to redeem their land share certificates for demarcated land plots (Gaynor, 1996: 2).

Phase 3: 1994 –

By 1994, when it was clear that most former state farms were still merely undergoing a change of name and economically viable new farms were not being created, further legislation was introduced to encourage farm directors to cooperate in the privatisation process and to provide incentives to increase farm production. Under this new legislation, subject to the approval of the farm workers, farm directors who had held their post for more than 20 years could be allocated 10% of the farm's land, as well as temporary use of another 10% that could be converted into permanent use rights if farm production improved significantly over 5 years.

Although my research focused primarily on the ways this redistribution process was implemented and experienced in local communities, aspects of the wider processes of agriculture sector reform also had a significant impact on local decisions and are germane to the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6.

Description of the privatisation process in farms' wider environment

As well as the radical changes taking place within individual farms, the wider environment in which they were situated was also changing. Under the old command economy system, both production and marketing were controlled by state structures. A network of state enterprises provided agricultural inputs, equipment and maintenance and repair services. Marketing, processing and distribution took place through another network of state-owned enterprises such as grain elevators, flour and feed mills, slaughter houses, dairy processing plants, vegetable storage warehouses, canning and bottling factories and stores. At the centre of the system were state orders through which commodities were procured to supply state stores, public institutions and the military, to meet requirements of deficit producing oblasts and fulfil trade agreements. Only limited supplies went through alternative cooperative or private farm markets. Quantities to be procured were determined at national level and allocated between regions and farms on the basis of long-standing production plans. Local administrators played a key role in approving farm production plans and allocating state order quotas. Without the approval of local authorities, local farm managers had little leeway to change cropping patterns or use alternative market channels (World Bank, 1994: ii, 11)[142].

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[142] The information in this section comes primarily from two detailed reports published, respectively by the World Bank (Kazakhstan Agricultural Sector Review, December 12, 1994, Agriculture, Industry and Finance Division, Country Department III, Europe and Central Asia Region, Report No. 3334-KZ) and the Asian Development Bank (Strengthening the Implementation of Agriculture Sector Reforms, TA No. 2356, Final Report, Volume 1: Main Report, September 1996). More detailed, primarily technical analysis of the privatisation of distribution and marketing systems can also be found in a series of reports conducted for USAID by the Carana Corporation in 1995.

Following independence, two key changes were made to this integrated system: first, concerted moves to privatise the entire inputs, processing and marketing system and second, reform and finally abolition of the entire system of state orders.

Like farm restructuring, the privatisation of agricultural processing, marketing, storage and input supply firms took place in different stages. Initially, in 1993, the various state agencies were incorporated as state joint stock companies; then, towards the end of 1994 and beginning of 1995, these state companies were reorganised into non-state, independent joint stock companies. However, as for farm restructuring, the regulatory framework emerged piecemeal and the privatisation process was 'haphazard, inadequate and at best, grossly mismanaged' (Haghayeghi, 1996: 17). Similarly, like farm restructuring, the privatisation of these firms took place on a completely separate track from industrial privatisation, one key feature being that it was a closed process, with shares limited to employees, suppliers and the state. Controlling shareholdings often continued to be held by oblast or rayon administrations, who were also often behind the creation of new private supply and marketing firms. In 1994, the World Bank concluded that, at local level, things took place much as they had before: "The emerging marketing channels resemble the previous vertical ones and many of the structures and people from the old state (...) organisations are still in place and functioning as they always have." (World Bank, 1994: ii). In particular, *Rayon* (district) administrations appeared to have considerable power over the four most significant aspects of agricultural operations: water, electricity, storage and processing (Haghayeghi, 1996: 17).

Between 1995 and 1998, the situation gradually evolved, as more independent private processing and marketing firms were created and a layer of private traders and middlemen emerged. However, the different types of farm were located in different positions. One key difference was between the new small independent private farms, which were able – or obliged – to rely on the emerging private supply and marketing sector, and the large joint stock company farms which tended to be locked into a more regulated structures. For example, in the meat and dairy sector, it was already reported in 1994 that the old supply and distribution structures were collapsing or being bypassed. The large former state farms already accounted for less than 10% of production, whereas 90% of meat and 92% of milk were produced by non-state farms and private plots and 78% of meat and 95% of milk were processed and delivered to market by private wholesalers and retailers (Carana Corporation, 1995). In contrast, by 1996, the proportion of grain marketed through private trading channels represented only around 5% (ADB, 1996: 63). The key factor in the meat and dairy sector was the emergence of small-scale players and intermediaries, who made concerted efforts to bypass the old structures (Carana Corporation, 1995). On the other hand, in both sectors, oblast officials often tended to force the remaining large farms to sell to the old processing/storage facilities. In the grain sector, in particular, large farms predominated and Oblasts and Rayons retained far greater control over production, processing and marketing. Here, large farms initially reaped the advantages of 'insider' relations with local administrations, which often gave them preferential treatment with respect to procurement of inputs and eventual sale of crops (Haghayeghi, 1996). However, as the state procurement system disintegrated and terms of trade changed, the large farms were put into an increasingly untenable position.

Quantities earmarked for 'state orders' – renamed 'state needs' in 1993 – were reduced gradually. In 1994 they represented only 40% of 1990 levels. However, the amounts involved were still significant, particularly for grain.

Table 4.1 State Procurement of Agricultural Products, 1980-1995

In percent of total production	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Grain	60.8	61.0	52.0	28.8	44.1	32.0	25.4	8.5
Seedcotton	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.7	97.6	99.0	99.0	--
Sugar beets	94.2	93.0	91.2	84.9	34.6	27.7	0.2	--
Sunflower seeds	72.0	64.5	78.0	49.1	37.7	1.9	0.2	--
Potatoes	28.4	29.2	24.6	16.8	10.3	6.0	2.7	--
Fruits and berries	39.7	51.1	39.2	7.0	55.1	21.3	13.0	--
Vegetables	68.8	74.0	59.5	47.5	31.4	19.4	10.5	--
Livestock and poultry	121.0	113.3	120.8	101.8	72.9	60.4	39.3	--
Milk and dairy products	50.3	55.8	58.4	52.7	40.5	37.1	27.2	--
Eggs	57.3	59.5	61.5	57.8	46.6	46.4	38.3	--
Wool	52.1	54.4	30.4	56.7	44.1	38.9	6.3	--

Goskomstat figures

The new private farms (*krestyanskie khozyaistva*) were not subject to procurement quotas[143]. However, the state procurement system had a direct impact on the strategies of the large grain producing farms, which *were* obliged to fulfil certain quotas. Notionally, the large farms could freely market the remaining grain outside state needs requirements. However, in practice, they often needed to contract their crop to the oblast or rayon administration in exchange for input financing and in return were obliged by the administration to market their output under their instructions. Officially, barter agreements with local industry (exchanging meat or grain for coal, construction materials or consumer goods to pay farm staff) could also only be undertaken with the approval of the oblast administration. Even following the abolition of the state needs system in 1995, oblast administrations were held responsible for ensuring basic food supplies and continued to interfere in the activities of agricultural producers/traders, particularly in the grain sector (ADB, 1996: 60).

Large farms were caught in particularly negative terms of trade. Prices paid by the state were considerably below world market prices and also delays of two, four or even six months were common, in conditions of rampant inflation. On the other hand, input prices were amongst the first to be liberalised, with price controls removed on farm equipment and critical inputs, such as fertiliser, pesticides and veterinary supplies and substantial increases in the price of petrol, diesel and electricity. Direct subsidy prices to farmers were also sharply curtailed, from a peak of 10 to 12 % of GDP prior to independence to 2 to 3 % of GDP in 1993. In 1994, the only remaining direct subsidy was for animal feed.

Large former state farms were therefore caught in a cycle of deteriorating conditions. In 1995, almost 80 percent of the large scale farms were reporting losses. As the Carana

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[143] In contrast, in Uzbekistan, the state procurement system in agriculture was maintained and both the new farmers and the collective enterprises were bound by the same procurement obligations. See, for example, the analysis in Kandiyoti, 2002.

Corporation reported to USAID: 'Many state farms seemed trapped in a destructive cycle. As a result of serious cash-flow problems most sovkhozes have not paid cash wages in many months. Workers are thus paid either with animals or in free feed which they use to fatten their own animals. The workers then sell this low cost (as they perceive it) meat through the bazaar at a lower price than the state enterprises, making it extremely difficult for the state enterprises to sell their own production profitably on the open market. The state farm's cash flow thus becomes even worse, and the worse the state farm's cash problems become, the more they are forced to pay their workers in kind and workers are forced to sell meat at any price just to get cash. As a result, state enterprises are indirectly cutting their own throats by essentially strengthening their main competitors. The cycle is likely to continue until the state enterprises are completely bankrupt' (1995: 16).

Gender implications of the economistic framing of rural development

The outcome of privatisation reforms in the agriculture sector was of keen interest to the international agencies during the period I conducted fieldwork. This policy analysis largely prioritised its economic aspects. When I began my research, the focus of debate remained which size of farm and model of restructuring could provide optimal economic and technical efficiency. Whilst some analysts considered that the flagship of reform should be the creation of small family farms, others argued that this would lead to the excessive fragmentation of agricultural land and that such farms would be too small to be commercially viable (Davis, 1996; Parker et al, 1996; Uzun, 1996). Likewise, I found that this economic and technical focus was being translated on the ground in the types of development projects being implemented by international organisations in rural areas of Kazakstan. In 1996, neither the Kazakstani government nor the donor organisations were conducting holistic or comprehensive rural development programmes. The latter were concentrating on piecemeal projects in particular sectors, notably macro level policy analysis and recommendations, loans and financing (including credit for small and medium enterprises), technical assistance (improvement of productivity and yields) and, on a lesser scale, support for civil society, notably farmer associations[144].

In terms of donor support for rural privatisation, a number of projects were concerned with privatisation of agro-industry, others were providing support to the new private farmers, but few were focusing on the farm restructuring process itself[145]. In 1996, I found only two projects, with rather different orientations, which could be said to bridge the paradigm change I referred to in Chapter 3. The first, ultimately aborted, USAID-sponsored project to privatise a number of dairy farms in Almaty *Oblast* pointed backwards to the technocratic approach to reform I have just described[146]. The project had been planned purely in terms of the economic efficiency gains that could be made by splitting off the potentially profitable dairy sections of bigger farms. Equity and transparency were important aims of the project,

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[144] In a report for the NGO INTRAC, Sinclair (1996) also highlights that the global interest of donor community and INGO collaborators in credit for small to medium enterprises\farmer associations as a developmental tool was reflected in Kazakstan and 'seemed to be the only approach currently under use and consideration for rural economic development'.

[145] In contrast, for example, with Russia, where organisations such as Winrock International were supporting farm restructuring.

[146] Koch dairy modernization project, Chilik Raion, Almaty *Oblast* (ACDI, 1995).

which sought to inform the farm communities about privatisation and enlist their support for the initiative. However, no social or gender impact study had been planned and, although the project manager acknowledged that splitting a previously united community might create conflict between those included and excluded from the new enterprises and that the fate of the social services previously provided to the community as a whole had not been resolved, he concluded that they were 'not out there to deal with this side of things'. The project's draft privatisation plan confirmed that the restructuring of the social services was outside the project's remit, since 'until there exists an infrastructure of thriving small and medium-sized enterprises that can be taxed by local and federal governments, there will be no money available to support a social services network' (ACDI, 1995: 13). In contrast, one pilot project, for EU TACIS, was conducting social analysis of restructuring farms, looking at the broader effects of the process on the social as well as the productive sector. Their analysis had concluded that privatisation had differential effects on the farm population, according to status, ethnicity and age, and was not gender neutral, especially in view of women's relationship to the social sphere and the gender stratification of production (Dale, 1996).

II. Social and cultural issues in farm restructuring

This latter analysis reflects emerging critiques of the purely technocratic approach to agricultural reform in post-socialist countries, which point to the importance of cultural and social issues in understanding and aiding rural reform. In Russia, the reluctance of many rural communities to split up into private farms, which was widely perceived as resistance to reform, has led a number of analysts to examine the rural privatisation process at micro level. They conclude that it is vital to understand the diverging interests and attitudes both between and within rural communities in order to understand why rural privatisation is taking its current trajectory (Brooks, et al, 1996; Brustinow, 1995; Channon, 1995, Perrotta, 1995, 1996). Again in Russia, other analyses highlight that, even in cases where there seems to have been relative success in creating new rural institutions, it is important to understand the cultural continuities, in terms of attitudes and behaviours, which underlie them (Wegren, 1994: 216-218; Hivon, 1995). For Central Asia, in particular, several analysts critique the current land reform and farm restructuring model for its focus on stark choices between state, private and collective ownership, which do not take account of the very different ownership traditions in pastoral economies (Mearns, 1996; Sneath, 1996).

By 1996, in line with the 'paradigm shift' described in the previous chapter, some of the western agencies operating in Kazakstan had also begun to address the social and cultural implications of farm privatisation. Research commissioned for the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 1996b) concluded that farm privatisation was entering a second stage - the establishment of profitable farming units - and that this involved considerable social costs. The report called for the development of a clear farm restructuring strategy, which would require analysis of the perceptions and attitudes of farm employees and former employees. However, I found that, unlike in Russia, apart from the TACIS project mentioned above and pilot research conducted by a Western anthropologist in the south of the country (Werner,

1994) little micro-level research had actually been conducted[147]. Likewise, with the exception of the TACIS project mentioned above, there had been no farm-level gender analyses of rural privatisation[148]. Some research on women's participation in agrarian reform had, however, been conducted in other post-socialist countries. These provided a comparative context for framing my field research.

III. Gender issues in farm restructuring

The framing of rural development as privatisation raised two gendered issues: first, as discussed in the previous chapter, it seemed that a range of 'development' issues directly affecting women, in terms of health, education, well-being or empowerment, were excluded due to the definition and objectives of current rural reform policy; second, as exemplified by the USAID project described above, the process of rural privatisation was cast primarily in terms of increasing the efficiency of the productive sector, which resulted in a lack of attention to the other, equally significant processes involved in decollectivisation. In fact, rural privatisation involved a separation of production and social services that were previously all 'public'. A state or collective farm was not just an economic unit of production, but what has been called a 'total social institution', which provided members with a status and identity, determined civil rights and duties and served as a social institution of production, exchange, consumption and culture (Humphrey, 1995: 7). State and collective farms were responsible for a broad range of services generally provided by various different institutions in other societies, such as electricity, heating, water, housing and transport, schools, kindergartens and hospitals, clubs, libraries and sporting facilities. In the privatisation model, these assets were perceived to be a major brake on economic efficiency, and were to be divested to local authorities or private enterprises. This was an inherently gendered process, since women stood in a particular relationship to these public goods. Firstly, far more women than men were employed in the social sphere, as teachers, doctors and so on and secondly, women were the primary users of these services, many of which had been specifically introduced to help them combine productive with reproductive labour and had been seen as evidence of the emancipation of rural women from their previous life of drudgery (Vasil'eva, 1975). Referring back to the discussion in Chapter 1, rural privatisation therefore involved a fundamental shift in public and domestic domains, that was not gender neutral. In Russia, research indicated that, since women had formed the majority

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[147] In 1997, the ADB commissioned its own socio-economic survey of rural Kazakstan to assess the social and economic impact of agricultural reform (ADB TA No. 2448). It questioned 3,300 respondents from six former *sovkhozy* and six former *kolkhozy* in 15 of the Republic's 19 *oblasts*, regarding their experiences between 1991 and 1996, looking at land share distribution, new farm structures, perceptions of restructuring, changes in benefits and services, household membership, and food consumption. Unfortunately, the data was not disaggregated by gender. For example, the focus was on interviewing owners of the smaller private enterprises, addressed throughout as though farmers are men. Therefore, although the survey draws interesting distinctions between subsidiary and private farms, it is not possible to see whether there is a gender distinction in ownership.

[148] Important research which has been conducted in Central Asia since the end of my fieldwork includes Koopman's study for BASIS/USAID on Gender Issues in Farm Restructuring in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (1998); Kudat, Peabody and Keylar's study for the World Bank on Social Assessment and Agricultural Reform in Central Asia and Turkey (2000) and Kandiyoti's study for UNRISD on Agrarian Reform, Gender and Land Rights in Uzbekistan.

of workers in rural services, they now made up most of the newly unemployed and that women with young children had also been prime targets for redundancy (Bridger, 1997: 46).

Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 2, state and collective farms did not only comprise a public sector of socialised labour, but also the sector of individual households, with their various income-generating strategies, notably their production from household plots or livestock. Again, the privatisation framework had only considered this sector in so far as it might serve as a blueprint for increased efficiency of the new independent private farms. However, looking back to the discussion in Chapters 1 and 2, given other experiences of capitalist modernisation of agriculture and the importance of this domain in local practices and identities, the relationship between subsistence farming and market-oriented agriculture was likely to be an important one. Given the experiences of capitalist penetration of agriculture elsewhere, one possible outcome was that women and men would be channelled respectively into 'subsistence' and 'commercial' agriculture. In Russia, research had found that one of the outcomes of market reform in the countryside had been a growing reliance on subsidiary farming for household survival and, given that the bulk of labour for household production was female labour, a concomitant increase in women's burden of work (Perrotta, 1995a). On the other hand, in Estonia, it seemed that the refocusing on the domestic world of the family farm had 'diluted rather than increased the difference between male and female burdens', with men and women operating together as a team (Abrahams, 1994: 225).

Another set of gender issues concerned the changing pattern of property rights and entitlements brought about by agrarian reform. It has already been demonstrated that different models of agrarian reform have different impacts on gender relations (Palmer, 1985; Jacobs, 1996). Important variables include the extent to which the model of reform takes account of women's separate rights in land, both de jure and de facto, the extent to which patterns of household labour and land use and the social wage are considered, facility of access to resources and credit and the importance of women's organisations (Palmer, 1985). Comparative research on different models of agrarian reform has suggested that, even where one of the aims of reform has been to share land more equitably between individuals, concerns for equality have seldom recognised women's interests, which are often subsumed under those of the household or family. Land is commonly assigned to the (male) household head, in which case kinship systems play a significant role in determining the outcome of land reform. Women may either lose rights or their rights may be largely unaltered – however, patrilineal and patrilocal kinship and residence systems, such as those in rural Kazak society, have often restricted the possibility of female autonomy (Jacobs, 1996: 36). One key issue in the Kazakstani context was therefore how land and property shares had been calculated and allocated during the restructuring process. In a collective or state farm, women were registered individually as members of the collective and their labour was visible, individually remunerated and a source of economic independence (Croll, 1981: 362). Therefore, to the extent that agrarian reform had been concerned to share land and assets amongst the farm membership, women and men both stood to benefit. However, the gender division and stratification of labour across the public and private domains on state and collective farms was also likely to influence the outcome of land reform and farm restructuring. During the late Soviet period, research suggested that, although women made up a substantial proportion of the collective agricultural work force, their parallel roles in

subsidiary farming and childcare meant that they tended to perform a lower number of labour days than men. In addition, women tended to be concentrated in the lower-skilled and lower paid jobs (Croll, 1981; Lubin, 1984; Allot, 1985; Bridger, 1987). Consequently, both women's labour input and annual earnings from the socialised sector tended to be lower than men's and, to the extent that mechanisms for allocating land and property were based on these factors, women might be disadvantaged[149]. On the other hand, other Soviet-era studies suggested that in some female-dominated areas such as dairy work, it was possible for women to earn relatively high pay in the form of bonuses for fulfilling production plans (Humphrey, 1998: 260) and that rural women were often less mobile than men, who were more inclined to move from one job to another (Hivon, 1995: 87). Some categories of women might therefore have benefited over others and over some groups of men in the calculation of entitlements and division of land and property.

Another gendered issue was how entitlements, contributions and rewards were being defined and registered in the new enterprises. Even if both women and men had both become shareholders and were therefore in a position to contribute to the new enterprises, the value of their shares and their weight in decision-making might be very different. Research in other post-socialist states suggested a number of issues that could be important in the Kazakstani context. One key distinction was likely to be between the communities or groups which had opted to 'stay together' in a new form of collective enterprise (cooperatives or joint stock companies) and those who had opted to become independent private farmers (Hivon, 1995b, Kaneff, 1995, Perrotta, 1996). In the former, those with a higher number of shares could expect higher benefits. Further, the emphasis on market values of profitability and efficiency

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[149] Caroline Humphrey (1998: 534) gives a useful breakdown of wages for different occupations on collective farms:

Pay for one man-day of various groups of workers in collective farms of the Tatar ASSR between 1966 and 1976

	1966		1976	
Category of worker	r. per man-day	% of lowest	r. per man day	% of lowest wage
Chairman	7.51	414.9	9.45	308.8
Chief specialists	5.61	300.0	6.71	219.3
Agronomists (lesser)	5.21	287.9	5.00	163.4
Zoo technicians (lesser)	4.90	270.7	4.93	161.1
Veterinarians	2.51	138.7	3.60	117.6
Engineer/technician	4.32	238.7	4.70	153.6
Brigadiers	3.43	190.0	4.67	152.6
Heads of *fermy*	2.95	163.0	4.25	139.0
Tractor drivers/ combine operators	4.02	220.0	5.56	181.7
Drivers	3.35	185.7	4.70	153.6
Milkmaids	2.41	133.2	3.98	130.0
Stockmen/shepherds	2.39	132.0	3.86	126.1
Pigmen	2.55	140.3	3.90	124.2
Manual workers	1.81	100.0	3.06	100.0

Source V.V. Dyukov, *Osnovnyye napravleniya sovershenstvovaniya raspredeleniya po trudu v kolkhozakh* (Basic directions in the improvement of wage distribution in collective farms), Izd Kazansk, Universiteta Kazan, 1979, p. 88.

was likely to lead to a reduction in the workforce, with a distinction between shareholders and those actually employed by the new enterprise. According to research conducted for ADB, the relative balance would depend on the type of farming system. The impact was likely to be particularly severe in the mechanised grain producing regions, where the existing land : man ratio was 25-30 hectares per person, whereas an economic ratio was closer to 300 hectares per person. In other words, given an average land share of 25 hectares, it would require 120 people to form a 3,000 ha farm, but only 15 would be employed initially and eventually only 10. The final report concludes that farm privatisation 'created a situation whereby farm employee/dependants face the highly unpalatable decision of voting 80-90% of themselves out of a job in the interests of creating sound economic farming units' (ADB, 1996b: 32).

In view of the existing gender division of agricultural labour, divestiture of social services and women's reproductive responsibilities, women could be particularly vulnerable to unemployment.

On the other hand, the 'flagship' end-goal of rural reform, the creation of independent family farms, also had specific gender implications. As Hivon (1995a: 78) points out, this form of restructuring represents a shift from a collective to a household form of ownership and agricultural production and to analyse it purely in terms of economic efficiency is to miss the particular impact on women of the division of labour and power within the household. On state and collective farms, both women and men were registered as individual members with individual entitlements, but this was not necessarily the case in the new family enterprises. It was likely that women's and men's roles and positions were being shaped by cultural norms and power relations within the household or wider kin group. Important questions included how women's and men's land and asset shares were being officially registered and how their respective labour contributions were being assessed and rewarded. In addition, given that one of the key objectives of rural reform was to unleash individual entrepreneurship, another question was how women and men were contributing to the new independent farms and particularly whether both were becoming private farmers in their own right. One of the striking findings of my research with representatives of government and donor organisations was the widespread assumption that women were not – or could not become – farmers in this sense of owning and managing enterprises in their own name, the few known exceptions proving the rule, although neither authority was collecting gender-disaggregated data on farm ownership.

Research in Russia and Estonia pointed both to the determining role being played by women in the new private farms and to the relatively low number of women officially registered as farm heads (Abrahams, 1994; Hivon, 1995a; Bridger, 1997). It suggested that men's and women's roles were being shaped both by practical economic factors, such as where individuals could contribute most effectively to household income-generating strategies, and by gender ideology and the gender division of labour. One interesting feature of these studies was their contrasting findings with regard to women's involvement in the new enterprises. On the one hand, Sue Bridger's (1997) analysis highlighted the ways in which former patterns of male and female labour on collective farms, reinforced by media images and official attitudes which cast private farming in terms of male farmers assisted by wives and

family, were making women subordinate workers in the family farms. On the other hand, whilst commenting on women's relative under-representation amongst private farm heads, both Myriam Hivon (1995a) and Ray Abrahams (1994) emphasised women's key roles in the creation and operation of family farms. The studies also raised questions about how pre-Soviet and Soviet practices and identities were shaping men's and women's roles in the new enterprises, and how far the new enterprises were changing existing patterns of work and values. Whilst the first two emphasised the relative stability of local gender ideology and basic patterns of gender relations, Abrahams found that the nature of both male and female labour was being redefined in the shift from state to family farming, and that existing divisions between men's and women's work and the values attached to them were blurring in the new conditions. However, he also suggested that pre-Soviet practices and identities in Estonia – in general a strong tradition of family farming and in the case of the maritime communities he studied, a farming system that affirmed women's independence – had also influenced this outcome. These studies therefore highlighted that the gendered outcomes of agrarian reform in post-socialist countries were shaped by and needed to be addressed in the context of local farming systems and gender ideologies.

Setting gender issues in a community context

I have argued that one of the limitations of the 'transition' model of rural development is its failure to address change in the context of whole communities. A similar critique can be levelled at many feminist critiques of transition, which have not placed gender issues in this wider context. In this context several issues were important in analysing the process and outcome of farm restructuring. Whilst agrarian reform may have a negative impact on women's entitlement, it may also widen the gaps between different sectors of communities and, in that gender is also entangled with age, class, ethnic and other factors, between different groups of women as well as between women and men.

First, existing patterns of stratification of the farm population during the Soviet period, including those of social status, ethnicity and age, were likely to interrelate with gender in creating new patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Across central and eastern Europe research had found that those who were already involved in market-oriented private farming or had specialist skills, and those who already held powerful positions in the farm or local hierarchy had benefited most and that there was a growing gap between this social group and others who had lost their security and status or had been forced into subsistence activities for survival (Kovach, 1994: 379). This had also been identified as a problematic issue in Kazakstan's agrarian reform, where it appeared that local elites had often 'grabbed' and consolidated control over resources (ADB, 1996b: 32; ADB, 1997: ii., 63; Hagayeghi, 1996)[150]. In this instance, women's lower representation in skilled work and positions of power in the farm hierarchy could lead to them being relatively disadvantaged. On the other hand, some categories of women could be among the beneficiaries, either as a result of their own positions or through informal family or kin connections. Similarly, the question of who had had access to what information and how was also important.

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[150] For a more detailed account of local experiences, see for example, 'Na puti k agrarnomu rynku: Pai – u baev, krest'yane – na podbor'e' in *Aziya – Ekonomika i Zhizn'* No. 19 (147).

Second, referring back to the discussion in Chapter 2, research in other post-socialist illustrated that local understandings of work, concepts of identity and relations to the state formulated during the socialist period had informed and directed responses, both moral and pragmatic, to the post-socialist economy (Pine, 1995: 53). The questions of who was taking up entrepreneurial opportunities and more broadly, how the emergence of the market and withdrawal of the state was perceived, were likely to be influenced by the communities' degree of incorporation into the state and local kinship, gender and community organisation. Equally, if rural reform was creating a dichotomy between new commercial and 'subsistence' domains, the way this shift was gendered and the way it was perceived in different communities was likely to be influenced by local understandings of state, market and domestic domains.

The core of the next chapter is a case-study of the farm privatisation process in my two research communities, together with additional material from shorter visits to a number of other farms. By investigating the various stages of privatisation – redistribution of land and assets and the formation and operation of new enterprises – from the grassroots level, it has been possible to explore how the process has been embedded in or intertwined with social and cultural, including gender, issues.
The discussion focuses on two aspects:

In Chapter 5, taking a narrow definition of privatisation as the policy of redistribution of the land and assets of state farms, I discuss the significance of gender in this process, looking at i) the extent to which existing gender disparities affected the shaping and outcome of redistribution and enterprise formation; ii) the extent to which the privatisation reform itself produced new gender disparities and iii) how the different examples of redistribution and reorganisation compare in this regard.

In Chapter 6, I discuss how far this 'narrow' privatisation framework is sufficient to encompass or explain the changes taking place in people's lives and communities. By looking in detail at one example from my fieldwork, I show that, to understand the nature of the new private enterprises emerging in Kazakstan, we need to look beyond the model of economic efficiency and individual entrepreneurship being propagated at macro level. In particular, this model fails to capture the specific ways in which the introduction of the market is intertwined with public (state) and private (kin, domestic) spheres in Kazakstan. With respect to gender relations, it obscures the further transition by which women are being 'privatised' in the sense of being relocated in the domestic sphere. It also makes invisible women's roles in the new private and domestic sphere, both in terms of their contribution to the domestic economy and their role in market activities, both of which are central to the new enterprises' functioning and survival.

CHAPTER FIVE

A View from the Grassroots - Experiences and Perceptions of Farm Restructuring in Three Rural Communities

'What do we have in our hands? Two cow tails and our subsidiary farm. What does the Director have?. The whole sovkhoz. Now talk about opportunities for getting rich!' (Woman respondent, Lenin sovkhoz, September 1997)

This chapter takes a narrow definition of privatisation as the policy of redistribution of the land and assets of state farms. Using material from my fieldwork communities, it explores the significance of gender in this process.

As I flagged in Chapter 1, in the agricultural sector, the 'transition' to market economy had led to a crisis of mounting losses and declining output and productivity (ADB, 1996b: 4-6; Haghayeghi, 1996; World Bank, 1994). According to the 'transition' model, the key to improving performance was to accelerate the 'transition' through more rapid pricing, trade, marketing and agrarian reform and targeted help for the more vulnerable groups (World Bank, 1994: 10). However, at local level, the loss of the entitlements provided by state farms and their replacement by 'targeted' benefits was widely perceived as immoral or unjust. Many rural people, or communities as a whole, experienced restructuring primarily as a move into the vulnerability of unemployment, poverty and exclusion. It was against this background that I began my field research in rural communities to investigate how far the 'transition' model captured the processes taking place at local level and the gender impact of farm restructuring.

My field research can be seen as a series of 'snapshots' of the changes taking place over three years as the former state farms made their way through the restructuring process. They did not begin the process at the same time and, once begun, it did not proceed at the same speed[151]. Indeed, the term 'process' does not capture the complexity and messiness of the changes which took place. Some of the key aspects of this complexity were flagged in the previous chapter, including the piecemeal development of legislation and local influences on its implementation, including local power relations and farming systems

The analysis begins with a reading of the post-privatisation landscape as I found it during my last period of fieldwork in the Summer of 1998, which is indicative of how the different communities and sectors within them used their land and property rights and entitlements and how gender figured in the outcome. It then turns to the processes which led them there. .

I. Working backwards: Reading the post-privatisation landscape

In 1998, my research communities were representative of the two main outcomes of privatisation in rural Kazakstan. Whilst in some areas, the majority of former collective and state farms had been dismantled and replaced by private enterprises, in others, most had

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[151] See the appendix on farm privatisation statistics for a brief overview of the restructuring process in the fieldwork communities and its relationship to regional and national patterns.

opted for little more than a change in name, with virtually no alteration in either management or production structures (ADB, 1996b: 29; World Bank, 1994; Coulter, 1996; Yesimov, 1996)[152].

Former Lenin *sovkhoz* typified the option of 'staying together'. The state farm had reorganised as a single joint-stock company, which was still in the process of being registered. Few people felt that private farming was a viable option. Only five small independent farms had been created. Three were still leasing their land from the former state farm, whilst only two had gone through the full legal registration procedure. Three of these independent farms had been set up by senior farm officials, who continued to have close links with the former *sovkhoz* and its director. One was owned by a group of Kazak kin, who had money to invest from trading and had many connections in the district. The other belonged to a group of cooperating Slav households who had pooled their combination of technical expertise and money from large domestic smallholdings. None of these independent farms were headed by women, although women had contributed shares towards them and some were also involved in working for them. The overwhelming majority of the *sovkhoz* membership had signed their shares over to the new enterprise. However, whilst they saw this as a way of maintaining security and stability in the face of chaos, they actually risked losing their entitlements.

Although, on the surface, the successor enterprise appeared to be very similar to its predecessor, beneath the surface fundamental shifts were taking place in its ownership and employment practices. On the one hand, the status of the new shareholders was far from clear. The new enterprise was being registered in the Director's name, which would give him sole title to land and property. In 1998, attempts by two of the *otdeleniye* to split off from the main enterprise, came to nothing since the director was unwilling to relinquish his hold on their shares. Shareholders wishing to set up private farms were also facing opposition from the director and problems obtaining their land and assets. On the other hand, although employment in the joint stock company continued to be the mainstay of most households' survival strategies, together with petty trade, subsistence farming and out-migration of family members for paid work, the state farm had been unable to pay money wages for over four years and the issue of how many people its successor could continue to keep in employment was becoming increasingly acute. In particular, it was clear that not all those who had contributed their shares to the joint stock company would be actively employed by it. The full impact of the distinction between shareholders and employees was not yet apparent. However, the Director told me that only about 30% of the population were working, and although he was trying to maintain work for as many as possible, this was made difficult by the farm's disastrous economic and agricultural situation and it could not continue to 'provide for the rest for free as well'. Although he had tried to maintain employment for single mothers with large families, his main concern had been to find alternative employment for the enterprise's male employees.

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[152] According to figures from the Asian Development Bank (1996b: 29), by mid-1996, 2332 state farms had been privatised into 6050 new farming entities, a conversion ratio of approximately 1: 2.6, but, on average, less than one independent (peasant) farm had been created out of each *sovkhoz*.

However, the distinction between shareholders and workers was becoming academic as the farm neared total bankruptcy. That Autumn, the farm was declared 'unviable' by the regional authorities, threatening workers and non-working shareholders alike with the loss of their entitlements. As the prospects for making a decent livelihood began to look increasingly bleak, people's major concern was when and how to leave the community with the maximum of what was due to them. Individuals' struggles were played out against the background of local power relations. My host and her sister, who worked in the farm office and had a wide network of relations and connections outside the community, were able to use their leverage to obtain at least part of what they were owed and were therefore able to purchase new flats in the *rayon* centre. On the other hand, other households without these connections were unable to convert what was owed them into concrete assets and were even unable to sell their own houses in the village. My last image of the community bore no resemblance to the image of a newly efficient agricultural enterprise or a patchwork of independent farms, where *sovkhoz* members' entitlements had been transformed into concrete ownership over the means of production. It was rather a shell-shocked landscape of empty fields, dilapidated farm buildings and machinery, boarded up public services and abandoned private homes[153].

The Lenin state farm was very slow to restructure and many of the processes relating to changes in ownership and management were still in embryonic form. In contrast, the landscape of both Druzhba and Sarybulak seemed totally changed. Both communities had not only followed the 'approved' model of privatisation but were in the vanguard of the farm restructuring process and by 1996, the original state farms had already fragmented into a patchwork of successor enterprises. In 1998, around 50 new farming enterprises of various types existed on Sarybulak and between 300 and 450 on Druzhba[154]. At one end of the spectrum were the large producer cooperatives, which tended to be based on former state farm structures, such as departments or brigades. As in the case of Lenin, legal title to land and assets was often held by one individual, generally the former head of department or brigade leader, whilst the shareholders who had signed over their entitlements tended to be a mix of pensioners, ancillary and blue-collar agricultural workers. Dividends were largely paid in kind, either as a proportion of the produce or harvest, or as inputs and services for domestic smallholdings.

On Sarybulak, the Sarybulak Association, the successor to the former collective, was typical of this kind of cooperative. Its Director, a former Komsomol secretary and trade union president, had attended the Communist Party School in Almaty and had many high-level contacts in government. As well as running his own private farm, he also held sole title to the association's land and assets, which he often referred to, confusingly, as 'mine'. In return for ceding their land and assets, the 227 shareholders were guaranteed a supply of hay and

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[153] It is important to point out here that I am not suggesting that there was a direct correlation between 'staying together' and this negative outcome. The neighbouring state farm had also opted to remain as a large joint stock company but was showing a profit in 1998. Humphrey (1998: 12) argues that the biggest difference between collectives in Buryatiya was whether they worked or not and that this was linked to distance from markets, assets and links to the state, but also to individuals, the ability of some leaders to plan strategically and fit together the diverse 'actants'.

[154] The figures I was given varied considerably: according to the land office, there were 434 private farms in the community in October 1998, whereas the village administration gave a figure of 385 registered farms and an additional 200+ which had not gone through the full registration procedure.

feed for their own smallholdings. Only a minority of the shareholders, mainly men, were also employed by the enterprise and most engaged in a number of other income-generating and survival strategies, including subsidiary farming, seasonal work for other farm enterprises, poaching of the local *saiga* antelope, petty trade, mostly in home-brewed vodka in the village and milk products in local towns, and the production of handicrafts.

Similarly, on Druzhba, it was mainly pensioners, ancillary and blue-collar agricultural workers who had put their shares into collective enterprises. For example, Sveta, a Kazak former agronomist, now in her sixties, and a widow, explained that she had primarily taken a land share to pass on to her son. He was still a minor and, feeling that she herself was too old to become a private farmer and concluding that, with no machinery of her own, she would have to pool her resources with others, she had put her share of four un-irrigated hectares and five irrigated hectares of land into a producer co-operative. By 1998, the original co-operative had disbanded, and she was leasing out her land, some to a local research institute and some to a private farmer in return for a share of the produce. It is worth looking more closely at this second land tenure arrangement in particular, which was a typical strategy within the Kazak community. For some time, I was puzzled at the exact meaning of the term *rodsvtvennik* (usually used in Russian to mean 'kin' or 'relative') and tried to elicit more details about the degree of family relationship involved. After a good deal of confusion, it became clear that that the man was not in fact a close blood relative, but a member of the same Kazak *rod* (clan), who had only recently come to the area from the ecologically devastated region of Karakalpakistan. Sveta's land share was just one of those that he was 'managing'. The arrangement between Sveta and this clan member was not based on any form of legal contract but on the trust associated with kinship relationship. When I asked her if she had a written agreement, she exclaimed 'no, of course not, he's my *rodstvennik*!' He was 'a good man' she told me, would give her half the produce from her fields because of their clan relationship (as opposed to the usual 15%) and additional vegetables as well as the barley from her own fields. Although the land was still hers, he made all major production decisions, such as which crops to sow. Unfortunately, after the harvest, Sveta received only a few sacks of grain from her fields. This did not seem to be an isolated occurrence and illustrated the vulnerable position of those left with title to land but without the experience or resources to farm it themselves. On former *sovkhoz* Druzhba, their land was being taken by more powerful farmers, either temporarily in the form of similar 'leasing' arrangements or more permanently, since, according to local interpretations of the legislation, any land lying fallow could be reclaimed by the local administration and redistributed to those who were able to farm it. The most vulnerable members of the community, including women pensioners, therefore risked losing their land, as the larger landowners 'gobbled up' their holdings[155].

One of the most marked characteristics of the landscape on Druzhba, and one which both distinguished it from Sarybulak and made it unusual in the national context, was that, although the entire state farm had initially been restructured into large producer cooperatives, by 1998 these had all been disbanded, mainly into independent private farms (*krestyanskie*

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[155] According to the ADB (1996b), the category of private farms is dominated by 2,500 such 'major' landholders, who are strongly differentiated from the mass of smaller farms.

khozyaistva or small enterprises) and a much larger proportion of the population was now engaged in private (peasant) farming. These independent farms, seen as the flagship of the privatisation reform by the donor community, existed in both communities and fell into different categories, according to the size and quality of their holdings. On Druzhba, respondents suggested a classification based on the size of farm holdings:

a) Under 5 hectares
b) 5 to 10 hectares
c) 10 to 50 hectares
d) 50+ hectares
e) no equipment
f) some equipment
g) full equipment

Another key distinction was how much of the most precious irrigated land each farm possessed. A similar classification applied to Sarybulak, where the primary focus was holdings of hayland (*liman*), livestock and equipment[156].

In both communities, the largest private farms were commonly established early on, generally between 1991 and 1994 but sometimes sooner, mainly by high-level administrators or senior agricultural workers. On Sarybulak, most of the former shepherds had withdrawn the livestock they pastured, together with 'their' traditional pasture lands, hayland (*liman*) and Winter housing (*zimovka*) to establish well-equipped enterprises. The most widely talked about example in the community and *rayon* as a whole was that of a former herder who headed a private farm with some 650 sheep, 150 goats, 750 horses and 85 cows. He and his wife had both worked as herders from 1966 and 1968, respectively, and had pooled their shares, together with those of his two brothers and the couple's five sons, three daughters and two daughters-in-law, to set up the enterprise.

Similarly, on Druzhba, the largest private farms were also those which had been established earliest and tended to be headed by former *sovkhoz* senior administrators and brigade leaders. However, there were some notable exceptions. One of the largest private farms was owned by Dina, a 52 year old Kazak widow, who had previously worked in a sewing cooperative. She had been one of the first to take up private farming back in 1989, when it became possible to lease land (*arenda*), leasing 28 hectares and setting up a small enterprise focusing on sugar beet, maize and vegetable production. The initial results were good and by the time the *sovkhoz* began to privatize, she had already been able to acquire a tractor and some other agricultural machinery. When the *sovkhoz* restructured in 1995, she received a land and asset share, which she combined with her daughters' land shares to form a *krestyanskoe khozyaistvo.* She was therefore one of the handful of people who immediately withdrew and registered their land and asset shares, rather than putting them into one of the new producer cooperatives. Shortly afterwards, these independent farmers came together to form a farmers' association and elected her as its head. The idea was not to combine their shares, but to follow a Western 'cooperative' model, creating economies of scale by working the land, marketing and selling together. When an EU TACIS project began work in the village, she

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[156] The original state farm covered an enormous 235,006 hectares of land. During the restructuring process, it was not pasture land, per se, which was most at issue, but pasture land with sufficient water points and the availability of the hayland (*liman*) needed to produce animal fodder for the winter. See Humphrey (1998: 458) for a discussion of the vital role played by hay land in the similar pastoralist collective system and the domestic economy of villagers in Buryatiya. The average size of peasant farms varies widely: in steppe areas, they may average 400 hectares, in irrigated areas, 40 hectares and close to cities, as small as 4 hectares (ADB 1996b: 28).

was one of the farmers to benefit from their micro-credit programme, and became the head of one of the *MTS* (machinery) groups it helped to form and support. By 1998, she owned or controlled at least 180 and possibly as much as 300 hectares, including a large amount of the most fertile, irrigated land[157]. By then, her farm focused on cereals and horticulture, producing mainly wheat, barley, fodder crops, potatoes and sugar beet. However, it also had a sideline in dairy production, and was branching out into food processing, with the launch of a 'mini-mill' and plans to set up a bakery. Hers was one of the very few farms to have a full range of machinery, including tractors and combines and other equipment needed for the different stages of agricultural production and also owned many of the former *sovkhoz*'s agricultural buildings in the central village, including barns and animal sheds.

In both communities, this type of large independent farm was vastly outnumbered by smaller ones, which were often established later than those in the first category and owned fewer hectares of land or fewer stock and less or no equipment of their own[158]. On Sarybulak, around 30 families had moved from the centre to the outlying parts of the community when they received their shares in order to farm independently[159]. Although they had all obtained summer pasture land, not all of them made use of it. As one former tractor driver explained, since his private farm had no machinery, only horses, they would need to hire trucks from the Sarybulak Association to get to their land, which made using it unprofitable. Similarly, on Druzhba, the majority of small farms had received land shares but no asset shares, and therefore no machinery or other equipment, making them dependent on the larger enterprises or outside services during key periods such as harvesting.

One example I got to know well was a farm managed by Bota, a 38 year old Kazak woman and former kindergarten administrator. She told me that she and her mother had initially leased 6 hectares of land in 1991 and had subsequently registered the farm as a private enterprise. Since her mother was too old to work and her husband was a driver and often absent, she herself was the head of the farm. In the course of subsequent visits, I learned that the farm was actually registered in her father-in-law's name. It officially comprised his and his wife's land shares and the official members included the couple, their two sons (including Bota's husband) and a grandson. Bota's name did not appear on the document and, in the records, I did not find any land registered under her or her mother's name. In practice, however, Bota was clearly responsible for running the farm. According to the 'programme[160]' established in 1992, the enterprise was to focus on livestock production and

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[157] Over the three years I conducted fieldwork in the village, it was clear that the amount of land she held increased considerably, but it was difficult to get a precise figure, either from the farmer, the local authority or the land office. There appeared to be two factors: first, she had been able to get more land through the local authority, as smaller landholders handed back entitlements they could not work, or, more controversially, had their land taken from them; second, a number of people who had a small land plot but no equipment to work it had passed their land to her. Although they continued to work the land themselves, she provided the equipment, seed and fuel, paid the tax and irrigation charges and received half the harvest in return. Some of these land transactions were registered but many were informal arrangements.

[158] The category of private farms in Kazakstan is dominated by 2,500 such 'major' landholders, who are strongly differentiated from the mass of smaller farms (ADB 1996b: 28).

[159] These figures were provided by the village Akim.

[160] Respondents in the Almaty Land Office informed me that initially, all private farms had to produce a detailed programme in order to get land, showing what they hoped to produce, in what quantities and

would also use its 2.5 hectares of irrigated arable land to grow sugar beet and lucerne and produce pumpkin for seed. However, at the time of my first visit in 1997, although some of the land was planted with clover and sugar beet, a sizeable proportion was given over to potatoes, melons and other crops for the family's own consumption. It was July, and Bota was making constant trips between these fields, to supervise fieldwork and irrigation, and home. I realised that as well as running the private farm, she also ran a domestic smallholding, with three cows, half a dozen pigs, sheep and poultry, which provided for the family's needs and some surplus goods to sell. Meanwhile, the garden plot provided the bulk of the family's vegetables and fruit. Bota's enterprise had no farm machinery, so was reliant on other farmers for ploughing and harvesting. She could not afford to bring in workers, so help at busy times, such as harvest, came from relatives from the city and women friends or former colleagues, who received produce as payment. In addition, she housed and provided for a Russian woman pensioner, with no family, who helped out with domestic work, childcare and care of the stock. In 1998, despite having received credit from a donor agency's farmer support programme, the farm was not doing well. Even less of the land was given over to crop production and she had sowed only barley and lucerne – all for the domestic stock. Instead, she was improving her domestic smallholding so that she could keep more pigs (100+) and more cows. If the farm was not working well from the point of view of cereal and beet production, she told me, the problem was that machinery was becoming increasingly expensive to hire, since drivers from the machinery association and the bigger landowners, who initially offered cut-price or free services, were not doing so any longer.

As this example shows, the category of small private farms merged or overlapped with the next category of subsidiary or household farms (*pod'sobnye khozyaistva*). As discussed in Chapter 2, most households had maintained a domestic smallholding during the socialist period and rising prices, unemployment or salary arrears made subsidiary farming a practical necessity for household subsistence after 1991. However, many subsidiary farms also produced a surplus that could be sold for profit. Conversely, by 1998, many private farms did not make a profit and were mainly used for family subsistence. On Druzbha, there was an increasing tendency for male farmers to leave agricultural work to the women in their households, whilst they took on paid employment in the sprouting small enterprises around Almaty. On paper the key difference between the two categories was that private farms were legally recognised as private enterprises, whereas subsidiary farms were not. However, in practice, since many private farms had never been officially registered and many subsidiary farms were equally large, this legal distinction was blurred.

Most households in both communities owned at least a small domestic smallholding, with enough stock and land to meet their immediate needs. However, in terms of agricultural land and assets from the restructured state farms, a substantial number fell into the category of the landless or 'dispossessed' - those who had either not been eligible for shares, had apparently never received them or who had subsequently ceded or effectively lost their entitlements. This was a relatively disparate category. On both Druzhba and Sarybulak, many respondents, particularly social sector and ordinary farm workers, were vociferous in their

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where it was to be marketed and sold. The early records generally contained details of this kind. However, as the reform had progressed, these criteria had been abandoned and later records did not contain such programmes.

criticisms of the restructuring process, claiming that they had never received or had been unable to redeem their entitlements. Others had received shares but had been unable to use them and by 1998 had ceded them to other enterprises or individuals. Still others had not been eligible to receive shares in the first place. This was a major sub-category on Druzhba, where large numbers of in-migrants, mainly ethnic Kazaks from the 'diaspora' in Karakalpakistan and Kyrgyzstan had chosen to settle since 1991. Many people in this category worked in some way for the new family farms. On Sarybulak, the largest of these employed families of 'close relatives' (fifteen in the case of the herder described above) who helped with the hay cutting and other seasonal work, in return for hay, meat and Winter fuel. Similarly, on Druzhba, the smaller farms, such as Bota's, often relied on seasonal help from kin and former colleagues whilst the larger ones employed in-migrants and labourers from the city, as well as having various share-cropping and other similar arrangements with villagers. For example, in 1997, Dina had 11 permanent and 30 seasonal workers at planting and harvest time. In 1998, this had risen to 35 permanent workers, mainly local families working under share-cropping arrangements and local families and in-migrants with no land or asset shares, and she also brought in additional labour from Almaty during the busiest periods.

Clearly, the different communities and different groups within them had chosen - or been obliged - to respond differently to the new ownership opportunities. On former *sovkhoz* Lenin, the vast majority had opted against establishing private farms. In the other two communities, whilst a minority, mainly the former senior administrators and specialists, had opted to create their own independent enterprises early on, others had done so much later and, as on Lenin, some people, particularly social sphere and lower-echelon agricultural workers and pensioners, had chosen to put their shares back into a larger enterprise. On Lenin the Farm Director seemed set to become sole owner of the enterprise. In the other communities, the largest and most powerful enterprises were consolidating, as those that were unable to survive either sold up their land and assets or handed them over to the larger producers. Therefore, behind the apparent discontinuity between the Soviet and post-privatisation landscape, there was a striking continuity between the previous socio-economic hierarchy and the present 'winners' in the reform process. As other researchers have described elsewhere (Verdery, 1998), it seemed that the former elite had been able to use the decollectivisation reform to convert its former political power into economic power based on private ownership[161].

Having said this, it is important to note that, in 1998, the 'winners' and 'losers' in the restructuring process were engaged in a game of snakes and ladders. Early advantage did not necessarily translate into long-term gains. Not all the enterprises that were established early on were successful. On Druzhba, Bota's farm was not unusual in experiencing difficulties. Similarly, on Sarybulak, a former senior shepherd and Party Member had been amongst the first to take land and livestock in 1992. He had then owned 650 sheep; by 1998 only 30 remained. He told me that several of his 14 children had got married since 1992 and his flock had mainly been sold off to finance their marriage feasts, each of which had required

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161 Many respondents talked about the phenomenon of shareholdings becoming concentrated in the hands of former senior farm personnel and administrators. Research for the ADB (1996b: 32) suggests that this is a marked tendency nationwide.

the sale of around 30 animals. Conversely, despite the odds, initial disadvantage was sometimes overcome. On Druzhba, Gulnara, a Turkish woman doctor from one of the outlying villages, was originally allocated less than one hectare of land. However, after considerable effort, she had managed to obtain a further 10 hectares of unirrigated land to set up a small independent farm, mainly producing fruit and vegetables. Her husband, who had worked for 25 years as a driver, had received 18 hectares of unirrigated and 4 of irrigated land, and had also set up a farm in his name. Neither of them had been allocated machinery and both farms relied largely on the same pool of family labour, although they hired some labourers during the busiest periods. Neither Gulnara nor her husband were aware of the donor support programme operating in the community and the only credit they had received was a loan of $500 from Gulnara's brothers. Despite these obstacles, by 1998, she had been able to make her farm a viable concern and was planning to diversify into cultivating flowers. These two examples demonstrate the fluidity of the landscape in my research communities and the fact that, in 1998, privatisation could not be seen as a 'completed' process.

What of the place of gender in this changing landscape? I have deliberately chosen to foreground women in the examples cited above. My reading illustrates that both men and women received land and asset shares from the restructuring process and that both were involved in the operation of the new farming enterprises that had emerged from privatisation. However, it also flags a number of significant findings.

First, in relation to gender and entitlement, there were both parallels and differences in patterns of ownership between the three communities. On the one hand, there appeared to be a correlation between gender and decisions to put shares into collective or independent enterprises, with women over-represented as shareholders in producer cooperatives and under-represented as owners of private farms. On Lenin, none of the new private farms were officially owned by women. Similarly, no women-headed farms were officially registered for Sarybulak, although I found three that were effectively managed by women. On Druzhba women officially owned a significant proportion (around 28%) of the new private farms, although, again, women farm owners were in a minority compared to men.

Table 5.1: Gender composition of private farming on Druzhba (official statistics from the Land Office)

Deeds (GosAkt) issued for private farms on Druzhba	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
No. of GosAkts	17	38	26	16	7	12	19	141	276
No. of GosAkts issued to women	5	6	9	6	2	3	9	40	80

Notes: The *GosAkt* was issued on completion of the cadastre by the Land Office. Figures were held separately depending on whether the cadastre was carried out with state funds or other funds (rayon, sel'sovet and individual). Officials in the land office pointed out that the number of *Gosakts* issued did not necessarily correspond to the actual number of enterprises since :

a) *The changes in land ownership legislation and in enterprise composition meant that the same enterprise was sometimes registered a number of times under new documents.*
b) *Some people paid for their GosAkt and then sold up.*
c) *Many people still had only their share (pai) and certificate (sviditel'stvo) since those that did not have the money did not come to get their land registered.*
d) *According to figures from the Almaty Oblast Land Office, as of 1.1.98, 2305 private (peasant) farms had been created in Druzhba's rayon, of which 1677 (c. 72%) had received a GosAkt.*

This gendered pattern of ownership raised a number of issues. Why were women under-represented as heads of independent farms in all three communities? What had led to the different patterns on Lenin, where no women had become owners of private farms and Druzhba, where a relatively large number of women had done so? What explained the discrepancy between the number of farms officially registered in women's names and the number of farms, that were *de facto* being managed by women? What were men's and women's roles within the new enterprises and how were their relative contributions valued and reflected in rights and entitlements?

Second, gender was also a factor in the typology of the different independent farms. Maps and records from the Land Office showed that on Druzhba, female-headed farms were a minority in the first category of farm (50+ hectares), whereas they were over-represented in the last two categories (0-5 and 5-10 hectares). My interviews suggested that differences in size of holdings were also correlated with differences between male and female farmers in terms of ownership of important assets, such as technology and farm machinery. Again, what explained these differences and how had women such as the powerful farmer on Druzhba managed to achieve their more advantageous position? Further, in view of the discussion in chapters 1 and 2 on the feminisation of subsistence and women's traditional role in subsidiary farming, examples such as that of Bota's farm flag the importance of the relationship between gender and private and subsidiary farming. Were the dual processes of consolidation and fragmentation leading to a further blurring or distinction between the two categories? Did people in the community itself perceive a dichotomy between the two and, if so, was it gendered?

The following part of this chapter explores the processes which led to the gendered landscapes described above, highlighting the interrelationship between gender and official models of ownership, local farming systems, power relations and cultural rules and practices. The analysis explores: 1) the official models used for allocating land and asset shares and how these were influenced by local understandings and perceptions about entitlement and local power relations; 2) the concrete translation of entitlements into the creation and functioning of the new enterprises.

II. Defining land and property entitlements: Analysis of the farm privatisation process

In the previous chapter, I suggested that farm restructuring, although an hoc process, had followed three main phases. There had been a shift from an initial 'ad hoc' phase of reform, when legal aspects were poorly defined and local power interests played a significant part, to

a more structured and equitable system, in which all members of the community were able to benefit, irrespective of gender, age, social status or ethnic background. Therefore in principle, at least from the second phase of privatisation, one of the explicit concerns of the farm restructuring process in Kazakstan was to divide land and assets between all members of the farm community, including employees, retired employees and ancillary workers (e.g. teachers) on an equitable basis (ADB 09/1996: 32). In theory, this meant that both women and men, as individuals, were entitled to shares and that women had an equal stake in the property of the new agricultural enterprises. However, the picture which emerged from my fieldwork was much less clear-cut. In so far as neither gender, age or socio-economic status were specifically factored in during the elaboration and implementation of privatisation policy and that the allocation of shares was based on the existing labour and salary structure, its socio-economic divergences were reflected in the outcome of reform.

Official methods of calculating entitlement

Officially, a number of different methods were used for assessing the land and property of state farms and dividing them into individual shares. These were taken up by each farm according to the preferences of the *rayon* or *oblast* administration and the wishes of the community as expressed at a general meeting.

Individual shares could be calculated on various bases:

1) all members were simply allocated equal amounts of land and/or assets, taking quality into consideration.
2) more usually, either land or asset shares, or both, were calculated on the basis of three factors :
    i) salary;
    ii) years of service; or
    iii) family composition.

My fieldwork communities used various combinations of these methods of calculation. On Lenin and Sarybulak, land was divided equally between all members of the community, whereas assets were calculated on the basis of salary and length of service. On Druzhba, the salary/service method was used to calculate both land and assets. On Miinbulak *sovkhoz*, which abutted Sarybulak, land was divided equally, whereas asset shares were calculated according to length of service alone. In contrast, in the neighbouring Dzhambul *oblast*, shares were calculated on the basis of family composition.

One key finding of my research was that, in all cases, one of the second options had been selected for whichever resource was at a premium. In the case of the vast farms in Dzezkazgan *oblast*, it was the availability of livestock rather than pasture land that was at issue, and selective coefficients were used to determine asset shares. On the other hand, on Druzhba, fertile, irrigated land essential to successful agricultural production was scarce and land shares were also calculated according to selective criteria. The same selective criteria generally applied also to shares in key farm equipment, such as tractors and combines, together with farm buildings and, in the case of the sheep-breeding farms, wells or water points and the limited irrigated land for fodder production.

With the exception of the first method, where land and assets were simply divided equally among members, the division of future land and asset holdings reflected previous socio-economic relations and therefore advantaged some groups over others. In my interviews with donor organisations, it was often remarked that young people had lost out with regard to both pay and length of service. They had therefore received lower shares and this, in turn, had made it very difficult for them to set up private farms on their own[162]. On the other hand, it seemed to be assumed that men and women had benefited equally from these different methods of calculation.

In practice, it was not possible to conduct a full statistical analysis for all the communities, since important data was either missing or unavailable. On Druzhba, although data on land shares was provided by the Land Office, there was no data on asset shares and the documentation on the gender composition of the workforce had 'gone missing' when the *sovkhoz* was disbanded. Conversely, on Lenin, the latter information was available but, after getting permission to look at the documents on asset shares, the Director then decided that they were 'confidential'. In addition, for various reasons, notably that very few individuals had actually taken land and assets to farm independently and that the farm was bankrupt and therefore unable to pay salaries, let alone share dividends, people had not been motivated to find out themselves about the size of their shares. However, enough statistical data was available to draw at least an indicative picture that I checked against detailed life and work histories.

Coefficient method

Gender discrimination was clearest in the 'family coefficient method' being applied in South Kazakstan, particularly in Chimkent and Dzhambul *oblast*s. The following example was reported to me by a colleague who was conducting research in Sarasuiskii *rayon*, Dzhambul *Oblast*[163]. According to this method, different co-efficients were allocated to different members of the household:

Family member	Coefficient
male head of family :	1
adult sons :	1
wife :	0.3
daughter :	0.2
daughter-in-law :	0.2
children :	0.2

The total amount of land distributed to each household was calculated by adding up the coefficients of its members and allocating the requisite number of hectares. In the case cited as an example, a household comprising 10 members, husband, wife, two adult sons and their wives, one daughter and two young children had a total coefficient of 5.5, which

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[162] According to one survey, the median age of private farm heads is 45 (ADB 1996b: 28).
[163] I am grateful to Sarah Robinson from Warwick University for providing this example from her interview with the *rayon* administration in 1997.

corresponded to 580.2 hectares of land. From the example given, it was not altogether clear whether the wife, daughter or daughters-in-law had worked for the *sovkhoz* before privatisation. However, it appeared that this attribution of coefficients reflected an 'ideal' representation of men's and women's contribution to agriculture, rather than actual work carried out on the *sovkhoz* by different family members. As such, women were disadvantaged in the calculation of shares, particularly if they wanted to set up their own independent farms. On the other hand, the system of allocating land according to the number of household members also meant that the shares of all members of the family, including women, were vital in order to create a viable independent enterprise, and this may have ensured women some influence in the new enterprises. This method was not used in any of my core fieldwork communities, and its implications merit further research.

Length of service (stazh)

Some state farms used length of service as the sole criterion for calculating asset shares. On Miinbulak, the former farm Director explained that years of service were expressed in monetary terms, and members could then 'buy' the corresponding amount of farm assets[164]. For example, 16 years service would have equalled 1617 tenge, of which 31% would have been taken in livestock, 25% in buildings, 16% in equipment, 18% in machinery and 3% in transport. According to the documents in the community Akimiat, members' length of service had ranged from 2 to 42 years, with long and short work records being spread across the different branches of the farm. The longest work records of 42 and 40 years were held by workers in the *Avtopark*, but records of over 30 years were also found amongst shepherds, in the administration, construction brigade and school.

Gender did not appear to be a significant factor in connection with length of service. Any periods of maternity leave had been included in women's work record (*trudovaya knizhka*). On the outlying *fermy* where sheep were pastured, brigades were often based on family labour. Women worked alongside their husbands as 'assistant shepherds' and often had as many years of service to their credit. On Ferma No. 5, for example, the senior shepherd, a man, had worked for of 24 years and had received a monetary share of 2425 tenge, whilst his wife had worked for 22 years and had a share of 2223 tenge. Their son, in contrast had worked for only 3 years and had a share of 303 tenge. Since assistant shepherds earned on average 30% less than shepherds, the wife would have been disadvantaged if the pay differential method had been used. However, under this system, she had an equal stake in the creation of a private enterprise. On Sarybulak, where it was predominantly the former shepherds who set up independent farms, the use of this method therefore meant that women and men were, at least in theory, given equal weight in their creation.

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[164] Interview with former Farm Director, Miinbulak, 26.7.98. Assets were valued at considerably below their market value. For example, one sheep cost 16 tenge, whereas the market price was around 2,000 tenge.

Pay and length of service

On Druzhba, shares were calculated on the basis of both pay and length of service. Data from the official list of shares drawn up in 1994 showed that, although both women and men, as individuals, were granted land and asset shares, this method produced a noticeable gender differential, cut across by age and occupational status.

Table 5.2: Share allocation on Kolyashchi otdeleniye (agricultural workers)

	Men	Women
95 shareholders	55	40
Average land share	7.6 hectares	5.5 hectares
% allocated over 10 hectares	21%	7.5%
% allocated less than 3 hectares	18%	32%
highest share	16 hectares (team leader, 30 years service)	
lowest share		0.48 hectares (young woman field worker)

Curiously, the land shares of the most senior white-collar workers, including the former Brigadier, did not appear on the document and it was not possible to ascertain in interviews exactly how much land they had received.

From a *de jure* perspective, although the models officially used for calculating shares did extend entitlement to both men and women, they therefore tended to disadvantage women to varying degrees. The length of service criterion did not discriminate against women, at least in these instances, where work records took account of periods of maternity leave. On the other hand, the family coefficient method strongly discriminated against women, whilst the pay and service method on average benefited men over women, whilst confirming the divergences between different age and occupational groups and therefore benefiting some groups of women over men and other women. However, one important finding to emerge from my fieldwork was that the theoretical basis for the calculation of shares was in many instances less important than how legislation was interpreted at local level and the ways in which these interpretations were mediated by power relations and interests within the communities concerned.

Local understandings of entitlement

Local concepts of membership

Although all members of state farms, including pensioners and ancillary workers, stood to benefit from reform, *sovkhoz* membership – and therefore entitlement – was defined within local communities themselves. The issue was a controversial one in all my fieldwork

communities. Some of the tricky issues involved the status of redundant employees, ancillary workers, pensioners, children - including grown children living away from the farm - and migrants. Gender was particularly salient in connection with the first three issues.

On the one hand, the timing of the share calculation and allocation was crucial to the definition of membership and had a decisive impact on the entitlements of unemployed members of the community. On farms such as *Lenin*, which were slow to privatise, the shares were calculated after mass layoffs had taken place in both the agricultural and service sectors. Although, in theory, if the person concerned had not yet taken up other work and still had their work book (*trudovaya knizhka)* from *sovkhoz* employment[165], he or she might still be eligible for shares, it was not clear if this had been consistently respected. However, it was clear that at this point, in 1995, the largest layoffs had occurred in the female-dominated livestock-rearing sector, where 40 of the 60 female workers had lost their jobs, and in the service sector, where the kindergarten had closed and the hospital staff had been cut by half. The few alternative jobs created as the farm switched to cereal production had mostly gone to unemployed men. The Director explained to me that the *sovkhoz* had tried to maintain men's employment as far as possible, although it had also made an effort to find alternative employment for single mothers or mothers of large families.

On the other hand, a distinction was commonly drawn between two groups of *sovkhoz* members, ancillary employees and agricultural workers, or as people often put it, between 'social sphere' workers and '*sovkhoz*' workers proper. For example, on Sarybulak, a distinction was drawn between '*bezvozmezdnaya'* (free) shares, which were only allocated to agricultural workers and the *'vykupnaya chast'* (purchaseable shares), which were allocated to everyone, including social sphere workers. On Druzhba, it was decided that since social sphere workers were not involved in actual agricultural production, they were not full members of the *sovkhoz* and therefore should not have the same rights to land and assets as agricultural workers. In recognition of the fact that ancillary workers needed to be given some incentive to stay in the countryside, they were allocated land shares, but the coefficient for calculating them was lower (1.5 for social sphere workers, children and pensioners as opposed to 2 for agricultural workers). Social sphere workers were totally excluded from the allocation of asset shares. On *sovkhoz* Lenin, similarly, no asset shares were allocated to social sphere workers, although land was divided equally between all members of the community.

The official share distribution documents illustrated that this distinction between agricultural and social sector workers had a considerable impact on the relative size of shares. Going back to the example of Miinbulak *sovkhoz*, social sector workers, the majority of whom were women, received much lower shares than agricultural workers with the same length of service.

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[165] According to my informants, the work book from the former employer is retained until the person concerned finds new employment and is issued a new one.

Table 5.3: Share allocation to agricultural and social sector workers on Miinbulak sovkhoz

	Total	Women
Agricultural workers	200	51
Social sector workers	99	79
Profession	Work record	Share allocated
Shepherd	22 years	2,223 tenge
Teacher	26 years	437 tenge
Doctor	27 years	454 tenge

Likewise, unlike agricultural workers, none of the social sphere workers from Druzhba's Kolyashchi *otdeleniye* received a land share of over 10 hectares, whereas many received less than 1 hectare of land.

Table 5.4: Share allocation to employees in the Kolyashchi village school

	Total	Women	Men
Shareholders	25	24	1
% allocated over 10 hectares	0		
highest land share	4 hectares		
lowest land share	0.2 hectares		

Pensioners, a group also dominated by women, were in a similar situation[166]. The Kolyashchi team leader, who was almost at retirement age when the *sovkhoz* was privatised, received a land share of 16 hectares, whereas a recently retired colleague received only 4.7 hectares of land. Neither social sphere workers nor pensioners were eligible for asset shares.

Distinctions were made between agricultural and social sphere workers in all the former state farms I visited. The explanations I was given centred on assessments of the relative value of people's labour contributions: whilst agricultural work was seen as contributing directly to the productivity of the farm and the development of land, and therefore as giving full entitlement to shares, work in the social sphere was seen as secondary or subsidiary, and therefore giving lesser or partial entitlement. Although it seemed that this division or categorisation of *sovkhoz* members existed prior to reform, it had been thrown into relief by the government's framing of restructuring, particularly the policy of removing responsibility for the social sphere from *sovkhozy* to local authorities. Suddenly, one group of employees were perceived to 'belong' to a different structure. Many agricultural workers therefore felt that it had been fair to allocate lower coefficients to social sphere employees, since they were now remunerated by the local authority and were thereby 'privileged' to receive a money wage. The division had clearly been sharpened by conflict over resources.

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[166] According to figures from the village *Akimiat*, as of 1 January 1998, there were 1564 pensioners in the community, of whom 1013 were women. This figure includes other sectors besides the former *sovkhoz*.

In the light of this, it was striking how little reaction it provoked among women who had been disadvantaged. This was partly due to the fact that relatively few social sphere workers had taken part in discussions on share allocation and knew little about the process. On Druzhba, for example, representatives had been sent to meetings from the schools and hospital, but the full workforce had not attended. However, many social sphere workers were not motivated to find out about their land and asset shares, since they did not intend to take up farming in any case. A common formulation in my interviews was '*zachem mne nuzhna*?' – what would I need land for? - followed by the assertion that farming was 'dirty' or 'demeaning' work and they preferred their current jobs. However, the few women teachers or doctors who did intend to use their land and asset shares were often vocal in their criticism. Women such as Gulnara, the Turkish farmer already mentioned above, complained that the system was unfair, because teachers and doctors had received paltry land shares and no equipment unless their husbands worked for the *sovkhoz*. In order to set up her independent farm, she had had to negotiate with the farm and *rayon* authorities to get additional land, and this had not been easy. This particular informant had had to demonstrate considerable energy and determination to get her land entitlement. In this, she had been strongly supported by her husband and other kin. Others, with less support, had found it very difficult to do so. Another informant, a teacher, complained that although she had been allocated one hectare of land, she had been unable to find out where it was. When she had gone to the *Akimiat*, they had refused to tell her, on the grounds that it would be no good to her since she 'wouldn't be able to farm it anyway'.

Two points merit underlining here. First, social sector workers largely shared the widespread understanding that agricultural labour was 'not their affair'. However, although there was some truth in this, it meant that extra obstacles were placed in the path of those women teachers, doctors, shop-workers and so on who did intend to farm themselves or to take their shares to contribute to a family enterprise. Effectively, the view that farming was 'not their affair' became a self-fulfilling prophecy. As the original producer cooperatives disbanded, and more people were obliged to take their shares, this issue became increasingly acute. Second, although these women saw the situation as unfair, they did not themselves interpret it in terms of gender discrimination. Against the background of unequal distribution of shares in the community as a whole, the women I spoke to distinguished between themselves as ordinary workers and the '*nachalniki*', or between poor and rich. As the woman teacher put it, 'Some people got hundreds of hectares and some of us got nothing at all. The rich have long arms. The people that were already in a good position, well they took everything and the poor just stayed poor'. However, given the gender structure of the *sovkhoz* labour force prior to privatisation, the distinction between '*sovkhoz*' and 'ancillary' workers effectively discriminated against women. The predominantly female social sector workers – and pensioners – were left with less land and no technical means to farm it. Since equipment was too expensive to purchase, they were dependent on others, either relatives or new associations of machinery owners, to carry out the necessary farm work, especially at ploughing and harvest time.

Local concepts of labour, use and ownership

Membership was just one of the areas where the allocation of land and asset shares was intertwined at grassroots level with other layers of rights and entitlements which had more to do with Soviet, or even pre-Soviet values and conceptualisations, than with liberal, market-based ideas of ownership and property. As in the case of membership, rights were perceived to accrue from working or knowing the land or using *sovkhoz* property.

Some respondents felt that previous control or use of *sovkhoz* land and assets should be reflected in its division. An example of this was the widespread practice of allocating property by work specialisation, whereby dairy workers received cows, tractor drivers received tractors and so on. On Lenin, the separation of land and assets had not taken place, but the outline of the process was already clear. In 1998, drivers and machine operators had taken to bringing their vehicles home each evening rather than returning them to the central compound. It was explained to me that if the *sovkhoz* were to disband, they were therefore sure of keeping 'what was theirs'. On Sarybulak, the process had gone further. Although, officially, all *sovkhoz* members were to receive shares in livestock, buildings, machinery and so on, in practice, previous use often trumped the official model. In particular, former shepherds had claimed and won ownership over 'their' stock and use rights over certain areas of pasture on the basis of Soviet work practice and using their informal connections with the farm management and local authorities.

As Anderson (1998: 78) describes for the Soviet arctic, a form of 'socialist individual land tenure' already existed for certain occupations within the state farm structure. His example of 'state fishermen' or 'state trappers' on isolated outposts (*tochki*), enjoying the position of single, authorised producer for a particular span of land, also applied to the shepherds on distant outposts on the steppe. In this instance, particular shepherds were considered to have exclusive rights over certain tracts of seasonal pasture land, together with the associated housing, wells and buildings. Although these outposts had been given Soviet names, they were generally referred to by the names of their shepherd 'owners'. As one respondent put it 'all the shepherds have their own place' (*u kazhdogo est' svoe mesto*)[167]. On Sarybulak, the shepherds were largely able to maintain these Soviet era use-rights, in the face of conflicting claims from other members of the community who now also had entitlement to land. That they were able to do so was linked to the fact that land claims were negotiated at a level where informal power relations were dominant. Theoretically, the privatisation reforms should have led to each member of the *sovkhoz* being allocated land shares which would then be converted into individual title to land. However, in practice, the local authority decided that the 26,000 hectares of pasture land was 'common land' (*obshchaya*). Actual property titles were only issued for hay land whilst the amount of pasture land allocated to each individual depended on the amount of tax they paid to the local authority[168]. In effect, shepherds were able to use this system to maintain their former privileged relationship with the local authority (Anderson, ibid: 79).

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[167] Caroline Humphrey (1998: 233) found a similar pattern in rural Buryatia.

[168] Land tax was 43 *tyn* per hectare per year. According to the local authority, the average amount of land per farm is between 3 and 5,000 hectares, and the smallest amount, 500 hectares.

In my conversations with shepherds on the *zhaylau*, it also emerged that they saw their deep knowledge of the land and animals as a further claim to entitlement. The former shepherd with the largest private farm explained that he had worked with stock for sixteen years, that he knew them and it would have been too painful to see animals he had raised put into other hands. Similarly, part of what made the pasture land 'his' was his knowledge of its ecology, of the other animals that shared it, the saiga antelope and the wolves and their relationship with the stock, of the range of different plants which grew there and the relationship between herding and the health of the land (Fieldnotes, 22/23.07.98). He also stressed that the animals too had their own relationship to the land – they knew it well, and would run away or become sick if they had to move to unfamiliar territory. To cite Anderson (ibid: 75) once again, 'knowing how to use the land and how to maintain a proper relationship with the sentient persons that one may encounter [were] necessary skills for gaining an entitlement to land for a herder'.

On the other hand, those who had not had use rights over land or assets during the Soviet period, or felt they had not been respected, framed their claims to entitlement in different ways. Many respondents in this category felt that the outcome of reform was a gross injustice, since their past labour for the state farm had also earned them entitlement. Others evoked deep knowledge and long-term, sometimes pre-Soviet customary usage as a moral imperative for current entitlement. As in the following extract from an interview on Sarybulak, people often combined or switched from one discourse to another:

> I worked on the *sovkhoz* for 12 years, milking cows, doing other jobs. I pastured sheep here for 5 years. My husband built the dam here with his own hands. But when we set up our farm, we were given only pasture land, a long way away. The authorities began to give out hay land (*liman*) but we never found out about it. People should have been given their *liman* in 1994, but it was hushed up. Only some people knew from the *nachalstvo* and got the land they used to use before. I worked hard. I should have been given the land which is next to our house, but a stranger (*chuzhoi chelovek)* has it. He leased land before, in 1991. He is a *bai*. He got everything – equipment, credit at 3%. And now he is a big farmer. He owns the agroferma. I should have got that land. All the years I've lived here, all the livestock we pastured (*skol'ko god zhila, skol'ko skot pasili').*[169]

On Sarybulak, another approach was to evoke a competing claim for 'use' or 'knowledge' of the land based on pre-soviet, clan-based land tenure rights. Unlike in any of my other research communities, respondents here and on the other former state farms in the same *rayon* often referred to their ancestral clans, complete with details about migration routes and traditional pasturage. In this context, a number of people in the community who had not worked as shepherds and therefore could not claim 'use' rights over particular areas were reaching back to the pre-Soviet past to 'claim' land which had belonged to an ancestor (*'ded/praded tam zhil'* – my grandfather/great-grandfather lived there). They would point to particular landscape features or tombs as marking the boundaries of 'their' territory. In addition, here, unlike in any other areas, several respondents explicitly referred to the livestock contribution which their grandparents or great-parents had made to the original

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[169] Interview with woman respondent on former Teu-Moinak *otdeleniye*, Sarybulak, 5.8.98

kolkhoz, and called for a restitution of this initial property[170]. One of the reasons behind this was clearly that the original kolkhoz had been founded on the basis of three clans (*uru*) and that this composition had remained largely unchanged throughout the subsequent changes. Relatively few Russians or Kazaks from different clans had in-migrated to the community. It was difficult to assess just how important these clan divisions were during the Soviet period. However, it did appear that they had been heightened in the context of privatisation. In other words, it seemed that clan identity had been revived in the new context of the struggle over ownership of *sovkhoz* land and assets, specifically to give weight to individual claims[171]. Several of the respondents I interviewed on the Summer pasture, who had not previously worked as shepherds, had been able to obtain land in this way.

Gender and local understandings of labour and use

The previous patterns of labour, knowledge and use-rights being invoked as a basis for current ownership and entitlement were also gendered (Chapters 2 and 4), and I found that gender interrelated with local understandings of entitlement in specific ways. On the one hand, the allocation of property by work specialisation was generally disadvantageous to women wishing to set up private farms and further widened the starting point between male and female-run farms. Since most tractor drivers and machine operators were men, technology tended to remain in their hands, whereas it was difficult for women working in other branches to obtain it. This was another disincentive for women wishing to start an independent farm and widened the starting point between male and female-run farms. On the other hand, on Sarybulak, shepherds' informal 'use rights' appeared to extend to women as well as men. At least one of the women managing a private farm had been able to obtain 'her' pasture land when she set up her enterprise. Since the others had set up their enterprises together with their husbands using land which had 'belonged' to both, the issue of individual entitlement had not come to the fore. However, gender was a complicating factor in claims over clan-based user rights over land.

One woman farmer explained that it was her husband and his kin who had a claim to certain areas of land in the community where their ancestors were buried. As an incomer from a different clan, she had no such claims, although the 'belonging' to the land was passed on to her children[172]. It would seem that, framed in these terms, women who married into the community would have no claim to land they had worked with their husbands on their own behalf, although they could lay a claim as mothers. Interestingly, in this context, this woman farmer had a very personal way of retelling the story of the relationship between the three main clans in the community, the *Boltaly*, *Shakhar* and *Karabala*. Despite the differences which had arisen between them, she said, they were originally all *Naimans*. More than that, they were three sons of the same mother, and, while she was alive, had lived together in

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[170] See Humphrey (1998: 94) for a discussion of the role of shares in the establishment of the first collective farms.

[171] In the other communities clan membership was not a feature of the competing claims to entitlement but on Druzhba private farmers' claims to land were challenged by counterclaims about customary use-rights to common pastureland.

[172] The fact that the children 'belonged' both to her husbands' clan and to the clan's land was central to her explanation as to why she could not leave the community altogether and return to Chimkent *oblast* to look after her elderly father.

harmony and friendship. Her retelling emphasised the importance of the mother's role as the 'originator' and 'regulator' of clan relationships to land. This aspect of the story was never mentioned by any of the men I interviewed. As this example shows, if clan-based understandings of land rights continue to play a role in the community, in-marrying wives in particular might be at a disadvantage in asserting individual claims[173]. Women's land tenure rights may also be threatened in other ways.

Another woman farmer on Druzhba emphasised that land was to be passed on to her son, but not to her eldest child, a daughter aged 24. When I asked why she wasn't considering giving her daughter land, she was incredulous at the idea: 'Why would she need it? She'll get married. What would she need land for?' (*Zachem ei nuzhna? Ona vyidet zamuzh. Zachem ei zemlya?).* In the future, the traditional custom of girls marrying outside the community and being provided for by their husbands may also lead to Kazak women being increasingly excluded from land tenure.

Power relations and entitlement

Just as official models for allocating land and asset shares were influenced by local perceptions of entitlement, they were also entwined with – and frequently trumped by – local power relations. The gender and other inequalities of the post-privatisation landscape also need to be placed in this wider context of the manipulation of land and property inventories and share allocation to the advantage of particular groups. Most commonly this took the form of '*prikhvatisatsiya*' (from the word '*khvatat':* 'to seize'), the process by which powerful members of the collective, usually the director and highly placed farm officials, used their position to their own advantage during different stages of restructuring. Donor organisations and the Kazak government suggested that a chaotic period of ad hoc reform, which gave free reign to local power relations, was followed by more egalitarian process. My fieldwork suggested that the division was not so clear cut and that power relations continued to play a significant role in the later stages of reform. Informants referred to various means by which senior management had continued to influence the share allocation process, ranging from manipulation of share inventories – for example, by failing to include land and assets already being leased from the *sovkhoz* and creative interpretations of legislation[174] – through control or manipulation of information to outright disinformation, harassment and threats.

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[173] On the other hand, in some instances, the connection between men and land may work to incomer women's advantage. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, I came across one case of a woman being able to obtain land where her husband could not. They were both incomers to the village, but whereas it was felt that the husband was not entitled to land, since he had 'his own land' elsewhere, as a woman, she had no 'clan' land and was entitled to land near the village.

[174] For instance, one informant told me that she knew of several cases of 'creative' local application of legislation in the Druzhba district, where the decree entitling farm directors who had worked on a particular *sovkhoz* for 20 years to 20% of total shares had extended to other directors. In other words, a director who had worked for 8 years, would be eligible for 8% of the shares, and this was interpreted to mean 8% of all livestock, 8% of all land, 8% of all machinery, etc - amounting in actual fact to 30 or 40% of shares in some cases. She told me that nobody had brought a case to court, since they were too scared.

Sarybulak was a particularly useful case study for exploring this aspect of the interrelationship between *de jure* and *de facto* aspects of farm privatisation. The director of the association had written an 'official' version of the process for an *oblast*-level conference on privatisation, which I was able to compare with his oral account of events and those of other community members, including local officials and former agricultural and social sector employees, now variously private farmers, unemployed or engaged in myriad 'survival strategies'. This comparison illuminated the elisions and omissions in the official version and highlighted the points of conflict within the community over how entitlements were allocated in practice.

According to the 'official version', privatisation closely followed the prescribed guidelines designed to ensure an equitable redistribution of the farm's land and assets. Following a general meeting in May 1992, a privatisation committee of 14 people was established to oversee the restructuring process. The committee first conducted a complete inventory of the *sovkhoz*'s land and property (then comprising 235,006 hectares of land, of which 11,218 hectares of hay land; 37,889 head of sheep, 193 head of cattle and 1852 horses). They then allocated individual shares, which, as we have seen, were calculated on the basis of members' labour contribution to the *sovkhoz* as of May 1992. Shares were allocated to 707 people, including 456 *sovkhoz* workers, 18 pensioners and 133 infrastructure workers. According to the official document, at this initial stage of the restructuring process, 78 people left the collective to form 12 peasant farms and 2 small businesses. The remainder joined the direct successor to the *sovkhoz*, the Sarybulak cooperative. Between June 1992 and the next phase of restructuring, various members of the cooperative left to form a further 4 small enterprises and 10 peasant farms. Then, on 15 November 1994 there was a general meeting of the cooperative, at which it was decided that it should be fully privatised. On the basis of the general meeting and 'at the wish of the members of the collective' the cooperative split up into 3 small enterprises, the Sarybulak Association and 21 peasant farms. By this time, the remaining assets of the cooperative comprised a mere 9103 sheep, 13 cattle and 250 horses. According to the document, of these, 2223 sheep were distributed in lieu of back pay and a further 2911 sheep went to cover the enterprise's debts. Notwithstanding, the report also stated that all the new *krestyanskie khozyaistva* received livestock, housing, agricultural buildings and equipment, in accordance with their share allocations.

However, in my various discussions with the report's author and other members of the community, it became clear that the process by which privatisation had been decided and individuals had actually been allocated their shares had been rather more opaque. On the one hand, the official document had entirely omitted the initial, 'ad hoc' stage of privatisation described by the donor agencies, during which substantial *sovkhoz* assets had already been distributed. As described above, around 17 people, mainly shepherds, had withdrawn from the collective before the process described in the document, taking considerable assets with them. On the other hand, the report did not mention the considerable changes in the conditions under which people were able to leave the collective over the period between 1992 and 1994. In 1992, when shares were allocated on paper to the entire community and

the *sovkhoz* officially became a private enterprise[175] people who left to farm independently were able to do so on advantageous terms. With their shares, they were able to buy stock and equipment from the collective at well below market price.[176] However, the majority of the population did not start to withdraw real shares until much later, in 1994, by which time, the conditions were not only much less advantageous, but in real terms, very little actually remained. In effect, on both Druzhba and Sarybulak, a considerable time elapsed between the inventory and allocation of asset shares, by which time many moveable items (machinery, livestock) had either already been allocated or had 'disappeared'. Many villagers never received their due. It was widely alleged in all the communities that the *nachalstvo* (farm officials) had used the privatisation reform to 'cream off' assets for themselves.

'They didn't understand about shares; they were afraid to take them; so others took them and then it was already too late'. (Interview with village Akim, Sarybulak)

'At first, people left on a volunteer basis to become farmers. They already knew what they were doing. The state gave them lots of advantages, credit and tractors. One or two years later, there were already far fewer sheep left on the *sovkhoz* and there was no order. Only the people who actually pastured the livestock got any shares at all. Because the process took place so gradually, some people got animals and complete pieces of equipment, but the others only got paper shares, not real shares'. (Interview, Sarybulak, *nauchnyii sotrudnik*, 30.7.98).

'The leadership (*nachalstvo*) made sure that they got what they wanted, then people with powerful relatives and connections (*znakomy*), and the rest were left with nothing. I worked for 27 years and got nothing, apart from a share of hay land last year. The association is not a real one, it's just called an association – it is actually run by just one powerful, rich (*krupnyi, bogatyi*) farmer. He managed to use his influence to keep all the equipment. He wanted to keep people dependent – so that they would need him for machinery for the harvest and transport for transhumance. (...) Sultan-Bai gave his land to the association and gets to buy hay in return. But why should I give my land to them and then have to pay them for the produce from my own land? Better I keep it for myself and maybe use it later on'[177]. (Interview on Arai zimovka, Sarybulak, 2/8/98.)

'You can't trust people to form an organisation. Everybody cheats everybody else. Here in Turar there are a lot of 'collective' *krestyanskie khozyaistva* with lots of people, but they are not productive. The management (*nachalstvo*) takes everything and the others are left with just 5 sacks of flour. It's better to take your own land and farm it yourself, even if you have no equipment. Most people had no information. The management called a meeting and just said that there was private property now and they would get land, livestock and equipment. But the livestock they gave out was all sick. I'm a doctor and I know – the cows had mastitis or were blind. Where they got them from I don't know. The officials got the best livestock and the

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[175] The term he used was '*kollektivnoe ob'edineniye*'. This term was used by local authorities to distinguish a new voluntary association of shareholders from the former collective concept, but it cannot be related to any of the various forms of business enterprise actually specified by the Civil Code (ADB,1996b: 29).

[176] It also seemed that some people 'bought' their shares, whilst some were 'given' assets, but the author of the report was unwilling to explain further and although this was mentioned by various respondents I was never able to fully elucidate this aspect of reform.

[177] The 'rich farmer' referred to is the author of the official privatisation report. Sultan-Bai is a friend of the respondent, also present at the interview.

equipment. They knew that the end of the *sovkhoz* was coming. Other people didn't understand. Then they held up the process. Told people to get together in groups. Otherwise people would have taken their own land much earlier.' (woman farmer, Druzhba)

'He arrived to take the Director's post with a 'bare ass' (*golaya zhepa*). And soon after, he was well-dressed, kitted out in completely new clothes from head to foot. Now he has a flat in M. And his daughter had a huge dowry. And all that on a director's salary? That was when the livestock started to disappear too. There are none left now, only heifers. The other director started to build the new club, wanted to build a swimming pool and tennis courts. He planted trees all along the roads. No-one understood what the boxes around them were for – so that when the gales blew, in Winter, they wouldn't be buried in snow... When he died, everything stopped.' (*sovkhoz* accountant, Lenin)

V Privatisation was a mistake. All it has meant is that the Director is lining his pockets, whilst most people haven't seen any money wages for the past 5 years.

Qu. How does he make money out of it?

V Take the blocks for house-building that he has just sold. I heard he sold them for cash. Do you think that money goes into the *sovkhoz* budget? How do you think he paid for the 70,000 *tenge* laser operation to treat his wife's kidney stones? Before there was more accountability (democracy). Before you could have complained to the Party representative here – or at *Rayon* or *Oblast* level – and he would have been removed from his post. Before, the director was appointed. But now anyone who has money and the right connections can become director.

Qu. Couldn't you take him to court?

V It would be no good. For one, half the *sovkhoz* is related to him. Three brothers and their wives and their families, not to mention the aunties and uncles. The same goes for the question of the asset share. There's no point in even trying to get it, because even if you were successful in court 1) it would take a lot of money (bribes) and 2) someone would set fire to your barn or your hours at work would be cut – in general you would be forced to leave of your own accord.' (Lenin: interview with teacher/private farmer)

'The people who started private farms in 1992, 93, 94 are doing OK now. Except for the drought this year. They got help from the government. But now it is too late. Nobody is prepared to take the risk. If in some cases the Director has taken everything, the workers are themselves responsible. They just keep quiet. So you have to suppose that they are content, that their needs are being met. We preferred to stay in the *sovkhoz* – we thought it was impossible to make it on your own – better to stay together (*'sam po sebe otdel'no ne vyzhivesh – luchshe derzhat'sya vmeste'*). My coupons are lying at home and as for the shares... We'll never see any dividend from those.' (Lenin, woman post office worker, 6.10.1997)

Qu. 'I heard something about the director taking everything?

D Yes, he took everything. He's a millionaire now. We had 3,000 head of cattle. Over three years, he sold them off, bit by bit. He was swimming in money. He bought a house in Almaty - 3 storeys, with a veranda, just like in those American serials. He bought a whole *mikro-rayon* (district). He gave a car to one of his children. And you should have seen the wedding he organised, they were celebrating for a whole week. Someone said that Nazarbaev is as rich as Rothschild - I said you don't have to look further than our Director.

Qu. But isn't that all your money, your *pai?*
Qu. (KG) Did you sign everything over to him?
D. Yes, most people did. But we were proud - we preferred to take our shares and try to make a go of it on our own. But it was impossible. It's very crowded in the south – you don't get 20 hectares of land, you get 1.5. That's not much. You can sow onion and live really well, but you need to irrigate the fields and that's expensive. It was free for the first two years, but now you need to pay a lot of money. There were four of us – that's 6 hectares. But we couldn't irrigate. The crops failed. There's a struggle for every little bit of land. And it's impossible to keep livestock - there are private farmers (*arendatory*) all over the place and there's nowhere to pasture them any more. Some people who took land, the ones who had a big domestic smallholding, did OK. They could slaughter their stock and use the money to buy goods and sell at a profit (*kupi-prodazh*), and then invest in the private farm. But we couldn't do that. It's a struggle between the wealthy farmers and the rest; they're squeezing the others out. If you can't use your land, it will be taken off you. We had to sell up and move - we had debts, for fuel and fertiliser. To be square with people we had to pay them off.
Qu. Didn't they allocate irrigated and unirrigated land to everyone?
D. In theory, yes, but in practice, no. People who, say, invited the local Akim to a feast, who had connections, they were the ones that got the best land. The whole process of getting the land law passed took such a long time - 3 years - because the private farmers wanted private ownership but the President said that the land should be Kazakstani. (...)
The *sovkhoz* had a whole range of small food processing enterprises, for sausage and butter, which supplied Almaty. The chief specialists – the head economist and the zootechnician – who were in with the Director, wanted to take them.
Those of us in the farm office, we knew about the privatisation - politicians would come by. The head economist told us to take our shares; otherwise we would be left with nothing. But then, for example, his barn caught fire – 'by accident'. But the whole *sovkhoz* turned out to help put the fire out and there must have been a whole barrel of petrol, it was burning so fiercely. The Director intimidated people – there was no encouragement to take shares. He wanted to take everything for himself.
Qu. And that's what he did?
D Yes. He started to lay people off. And in general he used the farm as his own private business to enrich his relatives. He milked it for 3 or 4 years. It's still functioning, but only just.' (Conversation on Plodorovsky, with former accountant from Dzhetiginskii *sovkhoz*, near Almaty, 7.9.1997).

As these examples show, villagers perceived power relations to be important not only during the 'first wave' of privatisation but also in the later stages as 'notional' shares were transformed into real parcels of land and concrete assets. Their accounts highlight inequalities within rural communities in the concretisation of entitlements.

Concretising land and property entitlements: The formation of new enterprises

Once land and asset shares were allocated *uslovno* (on paper) to the *sovkhoz* membership, the next stage was for the collective to decide on the structure of the new farming enterprise(s). In theory, this decision-making process was an egalitarian and democratic one. The farm management was supposed to conduct a consultative process to establish a consensus, and

the final decision was to be made at a general meeting of the full membership. Whichever farm structure was chosen, members wishing to leave the farm and form independent or smaller farming units had the legal right to redeem their land share certificates for demarcated land plots and to withdraw their assets. All *sovkhoz* members were therefore theoretically able to transform their hypothetical shares into real shares or property.

However, these hypothetical entitlements were only valuable to the extent that they could actually be concretised and a number of factors, including systems of assigning title to land, access to information and social and cultural understandings about authority, work and community, influenced the ways in which the different communities and sectors within them, chose to use their entitlements or were constrained in doing so.

Systems of assigning title to land

After the point where share certificates (*svidetel'svtva*) were issued to the membership, state farms followed different systems for assigning title, which had a significant impact on the extent to which individuals were able to assert their ownership of land and assets. One informant, the powerful woman farmer from Druzhba, distinguished between three key variants, which were pertinent to the situation in my research communities: 1) Confirmation of individual title 2) Director has sole title to land and property or 'Director takes all' and 3) Director maintains control over title through kin or other connections or 'Director, cronies and relatives take all'.

Druzhba and two other farms in the district had followed Variant 1). Each shareholder was issued an official land title (*Gos Akt na Zemlyu*) with an identified parcel of land and an asset share. At this point, people could decide whether to form associations or to go it alone, but their legal rights were clear. My informant considered this to be the optimal variant for protecting individual entitlement. I found that, although many people felt that the restructuring process had not been entirely transparent, they often cited the fact that they had actual paper certificates and real parcels of land as an encouragement to find out about their rights and consider becoming private farmers. Although many had originally joined producer cooperatives and had not been keen for them to be disbanded, unlike in the other variants, they had been able to redeem their land, if not their assets, when they did so.

In 1998, Lenin *sovkhoz* was an embryonic representative of Variant 2). During the meeting to decide on the future of the *sovkhoz* in 1997, the farm director explained that people could now take land and asset shares and farm individually, but also discouraged the membership from doing so and advocated the solution of creating a producer cooperative or other collective enterprise. The vote on restructuring was called directly after speeches by the director and local officials about the disastrous consequences of restructuring on farms which had split up.

One argument used both on *Lenin* and the neighbouring *sovkhoz*, Plodorovsky, was that, if people left the collective, they would go hungry and be left without water and electricity. This argument was endorsed by the *rayon* Akim, who warned people that things were much worse on the farms that had split up and, if they decided to do so, they would be 'on their

own'. Another technique used on both farms was to emphasise that taking one's land and asset share would also mean taking on the corresponding share of the *sovkhoz*'s debt, that their machinery could be seized by the state farm's creditors and they could face bankruptcy[178]. Rather than issuing individual titles, members were told to sign an agreement (*zayavleniye*) giving their land and asset shares to the cooperative.

On both Lenin and Plodorovsky, the population seemed to have been swayed by these arguments and had 'signed over their shares like sheep without discussion'. Nobody received even a paper certificate detailing their shares. Most people were unaware that their notional (*uslovno*) shares did not guarantee their future entitlement. In fact, until an individual shareholder actually goes through the process of getting title to land (*Gos akt na zemlyu*) and the new 'patent' authorising production, they have no legal claim to their land. As I left the field in the winter of 1998, the title deeds for the new joint stock company were being written up in the name of the Director, who would then have total control over land and assets. This had already occurred on Plodorovsky and other farms I visited in the Almaty region, where the director had been able to use his legal title to his own advantage. On the one hand, informants explained that after the harvest, when the shareholders could expect to receive their dividends, the director could claim that, after taxes and other contributions had been paid, only a small dividend remained. This dividend would be paid in kind in the form of flour or cheap Chinese goods, enabling the director to cream off profits and, in that the goods were often purchased cheaply on the bazaar, to charge them to members at far above the actual purchase price. On the other hand, any shareholders who subsequently decided to withdraw their land and asset shares would have to go through the director, who could show them the *Gos Akt* and say that they had signed away their shares. Even if they took the case to court, nothing could be done, since the title was legally in the director's name and the former *sovkhoz* member had signed away his or her rights. This had not (yet?) occurred on Lenin. However, one group of prospective private farmers told me that the Director had refused to release the land they wanted, on the grounds that it was being used by the *sovkhoz*. Instead they had been offered an alternative plot of poor quality land some distance away on the edge of the farm, which had not been cultivated for three years. It was only through subterfuge and going directly to the Land Office that they had managed to get the land they wanted, they said. They explained that there was no point in even trying to get their asset share because, 'even if you were successful in court a) it would take a lot of money (in bribes) and b) someone would set fire to your *sarai* or your hours at work would be cut – in general you would be forced to leave the community your own accord'. Other informants from Plodorovsky and the farms in Almaty region also referred to such direct or indirect intimidation or in some cases even violence, which created a climate of fear and dissuaded people from trying to redeem their shares.

Sarybulak represented a combination of Variant 2) and its more subtle form, Variant 3), which complied with new legislation. After a Presidential decree that an entire *sovkhoz*

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[178] The actual legal situation in this regard seems to be very unclear. None of the people I interviewed, including a judge working in the *rayon* centre and an administrator in charge of giving legal advice to new farmers in Karaganda was able to say to what extent private farmers were liable for *sovkhoz* debts, though the judge said that any liability was minimal and that the issue was being used to manipulate the rural population into signing shares over to directors.

should not be re-registered as a producer cooperative under one name, two slightly different practices emerged. On Sarybulak, the original cooperative was forcibly 'disbanded' and its members obliged to take their shares under unfavourable terms, whilst the director formed the Association, which maintained control over most of the land and assets. In other instances, the Director and chief specialists, and/or their kin and connections created separate 'cooperatives', in which case, as above, individuals trying to withdraw from the cooperative would find that they could not do so.

When Variants 2) and 3) were used, people's status was a key factor in their ability to maintain their entitlements. Those with some kind of leverage, due to their position in the community (position within the farm hierarchy, economic clout, kinship or patron connections) or links with powerful outside patrons, were better placed to negotiate with the farm director and other authorities than those without it. As one private farmer, a former tractor driver, from Plodorovsky described:

> 'The Director didn't want to let me take land. He said, 'Why do you want to become a bourgeois?' I said, I don't want to become a bourgeois; I just want to have my own land, make my own money. In the end, he gave me his permission - but he didn't give me any equipment, not even my tractor, which should have been mine. And he tried to give me land miles away, near the hills. He was afraid I would set a bad example to others. But one man, my father's age, a clever man, with two degrees, he got his equipment, no problem. He was the first to get land on lease too. But then he has connections - he's in with the *Oblast* Head of Forestry, you see. They go hunting together. He only has to say the word. The Director didn't make any problems for him.'

What this respondent did not say was the fact that he got land at all was most probably linked with the fact that he too had a degree of power through kin in Karaganda and through his father, who held the powerful position of Head Accountant on the *sovkhoz* for many years.

Although Variant 1) gave most protection to individual shareholders, all prospective private farmers faced the obstacle course of actually obtaining a plot of land and getting it registered with the authorities, involving negotiations with the director and the outlay of money, not to mention often bribes and exchanges of favours. Here again, gender and socio-economic status combined to produce cumulative advantage and disadvantage. Again, I found that the distinction made between social sector and agricultural workers in the allocation of shares was carried forward into the concretisation of shares. Even on Druzhba, where people had received individual title to land, social sphere workers found it especially difficult to obtain their shares. Similarly, women such as the sister of the farmer cited above, who had a senior management position on Lenin *sovkhoz*, were able to use their leverage to obtain land and assets for private farms or to withdraw their own shares. On the other hand, a woman teacher with no powerful relations and no financial resources had found it more difficult to get through this process. Again, the local discourse around disadvantage focused on the distinction between 'poor' and 'rich' or 'workers' and 'management', and did not highlight gender. However, my periods of participant observation graphically illustrated the gendered hierarchy of relationships, which impacted on people's ability to negotiate their entitlements.

In 1998, the Lenin farm Director was often absent and information about his rare visits would spread informally but rapidly 'on the grapevine'. The way in which people 'got an audience' with him, the order in which they were admitted and the attitudes they adopted were evocative of their relative positions. On one occasion, I arrived mid-morning to find several women pensioners, a middle-aged male Kazak worker and a younger woman from one of the poorest families, who had already been waiting for two hours. As they sat there, the various specialists, without acknowledging either the secretary or the people waiting, would barge into the Director's office. I noted that they were purposeful, walked briskly, gave the impression of being powerful, important and busy. With the exception of the head accountant, all were men. There seemed to be various different levels of authority: the specialists from the farm office each came in and out several times; the specialists from the *otdeleniye* entered, waited a while, then walked straight in. Meanwhile, the 'ordinary' people sat and waited patiently. As I sat taking notes, the younger woman took me to one side and tried to tidy my hair behind my ears, telling me that 'there are men here, after all' and that I should 'make myself nice for the Director'. She herself was dressed in a headscarf from which no hair escaped and a long skirt over leggings. When it came to her turn to see the Director, she demurred, telling me that I should go in first since she could always return the following day. The other people waiting agreed. When I insisted, she did go in, but came out straight away, saying that one of the specialists was still with the Director and he couldn't possibly speak to two people at once. One of the pensioners told me, 'you see, they are our specialists, it would be inappropriate (*nepolozheno*), bad (*nekhorosho*) to insist or to go in before them.' Shortly afterwards, the Director got ready to leave, and it was uncertain whether or not he would be back that day.

Relations within the farm were therefore governed by a hierarchy of authority, which seemed to be accepted, at least in public, by the ordinary members of the *sovkhoz*. Public space was also governed by set gender norms, which placed men before women, who were expected to be patient, modest and defer to men[179]. This hierarchy of authority was reflected in the resources available to villagers in negotiating their entitlements and in getting vital information about privatisation and their rights.

III. Gender, Information and 'Staying Together': A Case Study of *Sovkhoz* Lenin

One informant in Almaty *oblast* compared the current agrarian reform programme unfavourably with the Stolypin reforms initiated in Russia in 1905. The Stolypin reform had three clear points that peasants could understand, he told me: 1) everyone had the right to leave the *mir*; 2) people could take their land strips and garden plots to form a farm and 3);

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[179] My main informant, the woman I stayed with during most of my visits and who had recently returned to the community after many years on the neighbouring 'Russian' *sovkhoz,* explained that she had been criticised by her mother's kin for her ignorance of these public gender norms. Over dinner, using a 'map' of condiments and cutlery on the table, she demonstrated how a younger person should always 'give way' to an older person when walking along the street, stopping to let them pass first, and that a woman should always do the same for a man. She had been condemned as *nevospitannaya* (badly brought up), *neskromnaya* (immodest) and ignorant of Kazak tradition for not doing so. Since she had come to the community, she had continually to negotiate between her 'informal' identity as a Kazak woman and her official one as a senior farm official.

land could be passed on to one's children. The current reform was like history coming round again on a bigger scale, he said, only this time, even after six years, nobody understood the essence of the reforms. Although somewhat exaggerated, his critique highlighted the striking lack of information and confusion about privatisation amongst rural populations.

In order to take part in decision-making about the future of their enterprises and to make use of their shares, *sovkhoz* members needed information about the reasons behind privatisation, the process involved and what their rights, entitlements and options were. However, in Kazakstan, as in Russia (Perrotta, 1995: 5), I found that representatives of aid agencies unanimously criticised the lack of effort on the part of the state, local and farm authorities to explain either the principles behind privatisation or the practical arrangements for implementing it, together with the resulting inequalities in access to information across communities. Within the donor community, the fact that so many state farms had opted to 'stay together' was widely perceived as a form of resistance to government reforms in the agricultural sector and the lack of information and the innate conservatism of the rural population were the two reasons most often cited to explain it (ADB 1996: 30). It was argued that, if the farm membership had been more aware of their rights and options, they would have taken up the new entrepreneurial opportunities in greater numbers.

Despite the evident gendered pattern of farm ownership, gender was rarely mentioned in relation to this aspect of reform in Kazakstan. Elsewhere, it was suggested that women were one of the most 'conservative' sectors of farm populations in the sense that they were the least willing to opt for change and to take up the new entrepreneurial opportunities (Perrotta, 1995). Two possible alternative frameworks suggested themselves. On the one hand, women's ability to take up the new opportunities might have been constrained by lower access to information. On the other hand, women and men might have had different interests and perceptions of the opportunities and risks of reform. Who held what knowledge about the privatisation process and the new rights and entitlements? How was information circulating and did men and women have equal access and equal knowledge about privatisation? Or, alternatively, did men and women have different kinds of knowledge about the process? This section draws on a detailed case study of the links between information, knowledge and perceptions of privatisation on the Lenin state farm, which had opted to 'stay together' and where no women owned or managed private farms.

In this state farm, the approach of the *rayon* authorities and the community's relative isolation had clearly combined to reduce access to information for the community as a whole, including the farm management. At the meso level, the absence of a nation-wide government information campaign meant that the relationship between state farms and regional and local authorities was one of the most important vectors for information about restructuring. Discussions with the Lenin *rayon* Akim showed that, beneath the official discourse, local government approaches to reform differed both from state policy and from each other and had a considerable influence on the model of restructuring adopted by local state farms. On the one hand, echoing the language of the 'Kazakstan 2030' development programme (Chapter 3) the Akim stressed that it was important that everyone should become a property owner (*sobstvennik*) and feel that he (sic) was 'his own boss' (*sam khozyain*) and stated that the main problem was to change mentalities, get people to understand the new

conditions and take advantage of the new opportunities. On the other hand, he veered between this 'official line', and explicit criticisms or ambivalence about the reform strategy, sliding between the idea that individuals needed to change their (backward) mentality to the idea that the state ought to have taken more account of people at local level and their specific circumstances. These included the fact that people had been used to working collectively and had lived comparatively well under the old system, and the area's particularly difficult climatic and agricultural conditions. He ended by saying that, in these circumstances, it was neither efficient nor feasible to split up large cereal-producing state farms, which needed to be able to cultivate vast tracts of land with sophisticated machinery. Although he stressed that local officials like himself were relatively powerless, since they were appointed rather than elected by local constituents, the local administration was responsible for implementing the farm privatisation programme promulgated by central government and there was a strong correlation between the views he expressed and the outcome of restructuring in the district, where all 11 former state farms had opted to reorganise as producer cooperatives or joint stock societies. Informants from outside the local administration often suggested that, while paying lip service to the idea of privatisation, both the administration and farm directors had preferred to maintain the status quo. In other words, they had promoted the policy of enterprises remaining united with known farm directors in control, thus preserving their own power bases, networks and privileges. Private farmers, in particular, reported that both farm directors and the *rayon* administration had made it very difficult for them to form and operate their enterprises and that withholding information had been one of the key ways in which they had maintained their power. Conversely, both the Akim and the Lenin farm director downplayed the question of access to information. The Lenin farm director stressed that the privatisation process had been entirely transparent and cautioned me about believing rumours that farm officials were drawing any extra benefits for themselves. He positioned himself as a benevolent paternalist, cushioning the worst effects of increasing economic and social differentiation on women, pensioners and children and protecting the farm membership against themselves through keeping the enterprise united until they understood privatisation and changed their mentalities:

> 'People say that the farm officials are taking things for themselves. How is that possible? You can see for yourself that everything is visible here. No one could get away with that. It is just that people have turned nasty. Life is hard. In fact it is they who are stealing from the *sovkhoz*, terribly. They've got used to doing it. We need to change people's mentalities. They don't understand. But you can't make people work when they're not getting a salary. It's understandable. I'm not concerned for my own future. I have education, connections, and intelligence. But most people here have less education. There are growing divisions in the community. Maybe that's why there are all these rumours about the farm officials taking things. The people who have their wits about them are beginning to live a bit better; they are working hard. And people say that they are stealing, grabbing things. That's not the case – its rubbish; don't you believe it. In the town, where there are enterprises, there are officials like that. But I was born here. I can see how people live. My conscience wouldn't allow it. Not like the young people now – everything for themselves, grabbing. It is different here. We were brought up differently. Maybe there is something wrong with our economy, our political system, but our moral and spiritual education is better than yours. We help each other. What is happening now is normal. In any normal society there is a selection between people. People with more education live better. But before, simple workers earned more than officials.

> Maybe that's what it is – people are envious. People don't understand. The people who live worst are women, pensioners, and children. I can see it – but people don't understand it yet. If we had split into private farms, what would have happened? They would have set fire to the fields, the hay, and the tractors. Together, we don't trip each other up' (Lenin, fieldnotes, 5.10.1997).

It was extremely difficult to establish the veracity of either claim, particularly in the climate of increasing breakdown of trust referred to by the director. However, the persistence of the rumours about the seizure of resources highlighted the lack of transparency surrounding the restructuring process. Contrary to what he told me, I found that privatisation was a far from 'visible' process. What was clear was that neither he nor the local administration had made concerted attempts to inform the farm membership, or even its senior and middle-level management, about the process or their legal rights and entitlements.

The Lenin farm managements' accounts of restructuring tended to suggest a uni-directional relationship between the state farm and the local authority, with the latter giving and the former following instructions. I heard that the *rayon* authorities initially 'told' the community to reorganise as a producer cooperative, so that they would be left in peace. As legislation evolved, they were then 'told' to register as an A.O. (joint stock company) instead, and finally, in 1998 to register as a subsidiary enterprise, to ensure that past debts were annulled. The farm office had no copies of the relevant legislation, even for its own staff, let alone for consultation by the wider membership. The specialists stressed that, although the *rayon* had organised training courses for the farm officials responsible for implementing reform, they themselves had been unable to attend and had very little knowledge about the issues involved. As the head accountant explained:

> 'There is no funding. The bus, hotel and food alone would cost 15,000 tenge. We don't have that kind of money. Take the new bookkeeping methods. They came from the *rayon* and explained for one hour. They said there would be courses in Karaganda to learn more about it. They didn't give us any of the new forms. We don't know how to formulate things properly, so the tax inspectorate will fine us for doing things the old way. The *rayon* just said, get on with it, do as you think best.'

These observations about the farm's increasing financial difficulties and resulting isolation were borne out by my own participant observation. Between 1996 and 1998, contact and communication between the community, its district and regional centres and other neighbouring towns became increasingly erratic. Whereas, during the first year, there were almost daily comings and goings between farm management and local officials, in the last year these had practically ceased. Local officials seldom came to the community. On the other hand, debt and spiralling petrol prices meant that the enterprise was no longer operating regular transport services and, even within the farm's senior management, only the director himself still had guaranteed access to a car. Farm officials were often unable to get to the district centre for meetings or had to use their own contacts and networks to find transport. Within the community as a whole, access to transport – and to the outside world – was therefore an increasingly fraught issue and a visible sign of the emerging social and economic differentiation. A small number of people, notably households who had already owned a car during the socialist period and the enterprise's drivers, were able to use or, in the second instance 'borrow' their vehicles to act as private taxis. With the closure of the public

bus service, this was the only transport option available to most people, but many could not afford their services. As I discovered for myself, access to transport was also becoming a gendered issue. Like other women in the community, I found that my own need to get to the *rayon* centre or further afield had to be negotiated around the priorities of the handful of vehicle owners, most of whom were men. It was accepted that I and the other women travelling with me, even the head accountant, would defer our needs to theirs, often waiting for several hours whilst vodka was drunk and various deals were struck, a frustrating and sometimes even threatening process which made it difficult to plan or meet our own objectives. Inequalities of access to transport therefore impacted on peoples' ability to access networks and information outside the community. As the donor organisations had suggested, there therefore appeared to be a direct correlation between lack of information and a conservative approach to reform, with women particularly disadvantaged. However, when I began to look in more detail at access to information and views on privatisation within the community, I found that the relationship was more complex.

At the micro level, within the community, information about privatisation was certainly a scarce and restricted commodity, kept within the management circle and passed along informal channels, via kinship, work and neighbourhood relations, rather than openly disseminated, circulated and discussed. I found that knowledge about restructuring had entered into the hierarchy of authority described above, decreasing proportionately with distance from the farm office, the hub of farm activity, and with status in the farm hierarchy, with the Director and chief specialists the best, and ordinary workers on the periphery, the worst informed. From my interviews, it was clear that few people knew about the various options available or what their new rights and entitlements were. My informants' accounts of the period – between my first and second visits – when key decisions were taken about restructuring, suggested that the farm management had failed to involve the whole community in the required 'consultative process'[180]. The general meeting to decide on the future structure of the farm had not been attended by the full membership. In particular, difficulties with transport and – some said deliberate – failure to inform people in time meant that those living on the periphery had been largely unable to attend. As a woman informant from the farm office described:

> 'There was no official announcement that the meeting was to be held. You know how it is. They say Wednesday, then the *rayon* administrators don't show up. On the morning itself, we had to frantically ring around the *otdeleniye*. So not everybody found out about it. And there was no transport, so people just had to

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[180] On other occasions, I personally observed the way in which information was restricted to the farm management. For example, on my second visit, I interviewed a district official who had come to discuss the upcoming auction of the boarding school and kindergarten buildings with the Director. He told me that the management was required to discuss the impending sale with the full membership. No meeting was ever held. Although notice of the sale was to be posted in the local press, few people in the community had access to newspapers. It appeared that the farm director was the only member of the community to be informed about the auction. According to the official, if no one from the community came forward to buy the buildings – which would probably auction for as little as 300 tenge – they would simply be demolished and the materials sold off. The Director had apparently expressed an interest in buying them.

> make their own way, on tractors and so on[181]. There was no place for the troublemakers. So it was mostly the *nachalniki* (management).'

Relatively few women had attended the meeting to decide on the future of the enterprise. One explanation was that women were marginalised in the formal hierarchy, with the Director, seven of the eight chief specialists and the four heads of the *otdelenie* all men, along with eleven of the next level of employees (*sluzhashchie).* There were also fewer women than men among agricultural workers and social sector workers had not been encouraged to attend meetings. However, this did not provide a full explanation. To go back to the earlier example of the Lenin farm office, public space was governed by a particular gender code of conduct, according to which men were expected to act as the 'public' and women as the 'private' face of the household. As a woman teacher and main breadwinner for her extended family explained:

> 'My little brother decides important questions. Even though I'm the one who feeds the family, he decides. It's like that in Kazak families. There is a difference between inside and outside. A woman must not contradict her husband or a man in public, but in private she may argue. In public, she must always defer to her husband. Even if he is an alcoholic' (Lenin, field notes, 21 November 1996).

Accordingly, although both women and men might well be involved in decision-making, men but not women, were expected to take on the responsibility for playing a role in public debate. To cite another respondent:

> 'People here are passive. Many times I've tried to goad them into action. I don't go to meetings any more because it makes me too angry to see people silent, when beforehand they make critical remarks to each other. The women – OK – but the men should be able to get together, say from the Avtopark, the MTS, and confront the director, ask him to account for this year's harvest, check through all the paperwork. There must be one of them who can get his head round it. People say it's not worth it. They won't understand what is written anyway. And the director will hide the truth. What's the point? But we're supposed to be an 'A.O.' – it's *their* organisation. All of us have our share of money invested in it' (Lenin, Fieldnotes, 13 October 1997).

Conversely, women were expected to be responsible for maintaining the 'domestic front'[182]. Therefore, women's absence from the general meeting cannot be simply interpreted to mean that they were not involved in the decision about what form the future enterprise should take. I found that both men and women had clear ideas about whether their *sovkhoz* should or

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[181] Already, by this time, access to transport was one of the main dividing lines in the community. On my first visit, it was relatively easy to find ways of visiting the outlying villages. By my second visit, however, it was much more complicated. Since the enterprise was practically bankrupt and petrol was expensive, it was no longer operating any transport services. Few people had their own vehicles. Those with access were mainly men, either the *sovkhoz* specialists or drivers, who could 'borrow' official vehicles and acted as private taxis, but for a price many people could not afford.

[182] I found a similar pattern on the Dzezkazgan farms, where informants told me that most of the shepherds had attended information meetings, but the women had not, since 'they had to stay and look after the smallholding'. This did not mean that women had not been interested or involved in discussions. On the contrary, in this instance women respondents were often more willing to talk, at second hand, about what had happened at meetings.

should not have split up. Informants reported that there had been considerable debate but that it had all taken place 'underground – in groups of relatives'. When speaking to me, the overwhelming majority of women and men were equally vehement in their view that it was 'better to stick together'. A typical formulation of this position would be: 'We preferred to stay in the *sovkhoz* – we thought, there's no way you can survive alone, better to stick together' (*sam po sebe otdel'no ne vyzhivesh – luchshe derzhat'sya vmeste*). The majority of the population, both men and women, were therefore reluctant to leave the collective enterprise to start a farm on their own and their views were reflected in the outcome of reform.

Was this outcome due to the lack of information about privatisation? Would the farm membership have felt more empowered and acted differently if it had been able to make more informed choices? Undoubtedly, either due to ineffectiveness or deliberate intent on the part of the local and farm authorities, the *sovkhoz* membership was not given adequate information about privatisation or their rights and entitlements and this had contributed to a sense of powerlessness and fatalism. As one woman put it, 'if we had all been given actual shares, pieces of paper you can hold in your hand, then of course we would feel as if we could act to change things. We'd have the Director out in no time. But, as it is, there is nothing we can do'. On Lenin in particular, few people had been aware of the potential concern that they could lose their entitlements if the farm director registered the new enterprise in his own name. Even on the neighbouring farm, where one private farmer had explicitly told people that this was their last chance to take their shares and leave the *sovkhoz*, before the director became the 'master' (*khozyain*) of the new joint stock company, I was told that 'people just demanded 'bread', 'light', 'water' – they weren't interested in the question of land'. As this example suggests, people's decisions also need to be situated in the context of their own experience of reform. For the majority, the major issues were the maintenance of basic subsistence, food, light and water, rather than rights to land, and their choices reflected anxiety about preserving a minimum basis for existence rather than ideological preferences about ownership.

Therefore, the desire not to leave the collective was not solely the result of a lack of information or misinformation, but also a rational response to the difficulties involved and a reflection of people's assessment of opportunity and risk and moral value. For the majority of my informants on Lenin, it appeared more advantageous to stay in a joint-stock society and work collectively than to risk running a farm on their own. When I asked informants why they did not want to start their own farm, they gave a number of reasons. They explained that agriculture was particularly difficult in the area, which was often subject to drought. Whereas, in the south, farmers could grow different varieties and the fields were smaller so they could irrigate if necessary, in their area, the size of the fields would be a problem for individual farmers, who could not afford to bring in planes to spray water and pesticides as the big enterprises did. Others cited problems with equipment: without government support or credit it would be far too expensive to purchase machinery and other inputs. Others focused on the isolation of the community: even if in theory it would be more profitable to farm independently, there would be too many problems in actually getting their produce to town, especially when one took account of petrol and the wear and tear on vehicles. As we

have seen, under the 'official discourse' about privatisation, similar concerns were voiced by the *rayon* Akim and other representatives of the regional and local authorities.

A further set of reasons for not becoming private farmers concerned the loss of the support and benefits provided by membership of a collective. The head of one of the new private farms explained that its members had used land granted by the *rayon* Akim rather than their own land shares to set up the enterprise, so that 'if anything happens, we are still members of the *sovkhoz* and entitled to the services it provides'. Although by 1998, wages had not been paid for six years, these services and privileges were still considerable. Members of the collective were eligible to receive meat, bread, and milk, together with winter coal and fodder for their subsidiary farms – when these were available – either in lieu of wages or at well below market rates. In addition, enterprise members had social security and medical coverage, which was still extremely important, even if many medical services now had to be paid for.

A final set of reasons was connected with the way villagers understood community, solidarity and entitlement. There was a perception that becoming a private farmer meant undermining community solidarity for selfish, individual gain. Respondents told me that, although private farmers might be doing well, they were 'only in it for themselves,' didn't pay taxes and didn't pay into the pension fund. In the state farms that had split up, everyone was 'looking out for himself or herself' (*kazhdii sam po sebe*) and nobody helped anybody any more. 'Staying together', representing order, mutual help and support was therefore counterpoised against 'splitting up', representing selfish greed, disorder and chaos.

These reasons were not specific to either women or men. However, men and women did tend to rank them differently, with men placing more stress on the agricultural problems and women on the social aspects and the loss of the benefits of membership of the collective. This gender difference was also reflected in the way in which women and men talked about the privatisation process in general. In answer to my question about how privatisation had been conducted in the community and how it had affected their lives, both men and women often referred primarily to disorder (*besporyadok*) or collapse (*razval*) and the fact that the main consequence was that various people, particularly the farm officials, were now able to steal or scrounge (*vorovat'; khapnut'*) state property. Judging reform according to the perceptible results in their own lives rather than by reference to abstract ideological preferences, they saw reform as a watermark between 'now' and 'before': 'before' salaries had been paid on time, there was plenty of everything and it was even possible to save to buy luxuries; now, wages hadn't been paid for years and they lived from day to day, scraping to make ends meet'[183].

However, whereas men often spontaneously went on to refer to privatisation in the sense of changes in enterprise structure, women rarely mentioned privatisation in this sense without being prompted by me. Instead, they referred most often to everyday difficulties with money, medicines and food: how to pay for the children's clothes and schoolbooks, how to

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[183] Perrotta (1995) found a similar pattern in rural Russia, where the majority of respondents were also more concerned with basic survival than questions of entitlement and ownership.

maintain the family's health and how to get food on the table. In this context, one of the most striking phrases used by several women in focus group interviews was that the main result of privatisation was that the farm management had literally 'eaten everything up' (*oni vsye s'eli*). It seemed that whereas men were looking through the lens of their 'outside' roles, women were mainly seeing the problems and opportunities of privatisation through the lens of their 'inside' or domestic responsibility of 'feeding the family'. Thus, although on Lenin both men and women were resistant to the idea of leaving the collective, women respondents saw a particular disincentive in doing so. Although they agreed that private farming might ultimately be more profitable, they felt it was also a much more risky venture in terms of family security and provisioning.

Attitudes towards setting up private farms also varied between different categories of women. On Lenin, where the shift away from agricultural work for women was perceived as a sign of progress and modernity (Chapter 2), age and profession were key factors. Older respondents, many of whom had worked as tractor or combine operators, tended to be less opposed to the idea of private farming than the younger generation, although they felt that they were too old to take up the opportunity themselves. On the other hand, younger women, particularly those employed in administrative or social sector work valued the status and position this gave them and often saw agricultural labour as dirty and demeaning. They explained that whereas being an employee meant regular hours, having one's own income and benefiting from a network of colleagues who provided both friendship and crucial access to information and resources, becoming a private farmer would entail the loss of these social networks, as well as involving long hours and exhausting work, with no clear value or status.

It was interesting that many women social sector workers on Druzhba also held a similar attitude, summed up by one informant who had lost her job as an agronomist in 1991 and whose husband and son had set up a private farm with which she did not want to be involved:

> 'Why should I work for the farm? What for? When I worked, I felt like a human being. Now I am nothing. A housewife. I used to have my own niche, I felt independent, I had my own money. Now look how my husband and son are working – round the clock. If I need something, I have to ask them for money. But I prefer to work as an employee. You get up in the morning, go to work, come home. Women felt protected before. They worked and felt like human beings.'

On Druzhba, even women who had become private farmers also referred to the particular disincentives and problems they faced:

> 'Things are much more difficult for women private farmers than for men. The men come home and usually have a wife who has done everything in the house. But I am responsible for everything, the *ogorod* and the house as well as the fields. Some days, like today, I think I will go mad. I had to milk the cows, but then something needed seeing to in the house; then I was baking the *pirozhki*, but had to go to the fields halfway through and get my daughters to finish the baking. Both of them work to a strict rota, there's no spare time. Then I had to get back to check the pies, then back to the field to give drinking water to the boys. And now I have to go and have words with the other water users, because they're taking more than their share.

> My husband doesn't help much. The farm is my responsibility. (...) But there are no benefits for farmers, not even child allowance. One of us had to stay in production to have a workbook and social security. We can't count on the future. Anything could happen. The land could be taken away again. We mustn't put all our eggs in one basket.' (Fieldnotes, 18 July 1997)

For women, then, the choice of what form the new enterprise should take could not be weighed up in terms of relative profitability alone, but was also part of a wider net of concerns connected with their domestic responsibilities and their own status. In particular, many respondents perceived the move from the protective umbrella of state employment, which made women 'feel like human beings', to the 'family' form of labour on private farms as threatening to their independence. This was in strong contrast to many male respondents, who explicitly saw farming as an opportunity to become one's own master (*sam khozyain*).

The discourse of the private farmer as his 'own master' appeared to dovetail more closely with local perceptions of men's roles. Both the terms '*khozyain*' (boss/master) and '*sobstvennik*' (property owner) are of masculine gender and carry connotations of authority and leadership. The opinion, voiced by both men and women, was that both pertained to men's 'outside' responsibilities and it was therefore inappropriate for women to take on major leadership roles. This view was clearly expressed by the woman *oblast* administrator responsible for giving legal advice to the new private farmers. Discussing a forthcoming legal case, in which the widow of a private farmer was disputing ownership of the farm with her brother-in-law, she said that it would be a bad thing if the woman won, since 'women rarely know how to be leaders' (*redko zhenshchina umeet rukovodit'*). Both male and female respondents within the Lenin community echoed her views.

On the other hand, the local division of labour also contributed to the widespread perception that women didn't or couldn't farm. My questions about women farmers and women's roles in the new private farms were generally met with incredulity, even among respondents such as these, whose wives were had contributed shares to the new enterprises:

> Qu. What will your wife's role be on the farm?
> V. (Amazement). What role? She won't be involved. She might help out from time to time.
> Qu. But her share is part of the farm. How will you organise decision-making?
> V. I haven't thought about such trifling details as that. There are major questions to be decided. As a share-holder, my wife is a founding member. God forbid it should ever come to that, but she can withdraw her land and farm it herself, do whatever she wants.

> Qu. How are the women in the family involved in the farm?
> A. (Non-plussed).
> Qu. In the South a lot of women have become farmers...
> A. Things are different here. Everything's going back to how it was before. There is no work for women. They sit at home and raise (*vyrashchivat'* – literally, grow) the children.

> Qu. Did you ever consider leaving the *sovkhoz* to set up a private farm?
> L. 'Yes, we thought about becoming private farmers. My husband can drive a tractor and operate machinery. He can turn his hand to anything. He could do the

> agricultural work with my son and my daughter and I could concentrate on the vegetable plot and the livestock, the cows, sheep hens and geese'.

As these examples show, farming was generally equated with agricultural work with machinery, which was defined as 'men's work', and not with women's activities, which were generally categorised as 'help'. Only a few respondents, all of them women, included them explicitly in their discussions of private farming. Within the Lenin community and the surrounding region, the new discourse on private ownership and the 'restoration' of women's 'traditional' roles therefore combined with the local gender code and division of labour to discourage women taking up private farming, especially as owners in their own right.

An exploration of people's knowledge about privatisation on Lenin illustrates that the donor organisations' diagnosis of farm populations either as latent entrepreneurs, who, if given the right information, would take advantage of the new opportunities, or as innate conservatives, resistant to change, was overly reductive. Although lack of information about privatisation, rights and entitlements had certainly contributed to the community's resistance to the government-sponsored model of restructuring, it did not provide a full explanation of it. The decision to 'stay together' was a product of local models of authority, knowledge of farming conditions and perceptions of opportunity and risk as well as confusion about the privatisation process itself. In addition, the farm population was weighing up the new entitlements to own land and assets against another set of 'social' entitlements and community ties which would be threatened by the move to private farming and which had not been taken into account in the official privatisation model. In terms of gender, women's marginalisation in the formal hierarchy certainly meant that they were less well-informed about privatisation per se and relatively excluded from the formal decision making process. On the other hand, women did make their voices heard through the informal channels underpinning the formal farm structures. What they expressed showed that men and women had different kinds of knowledge about the opportunities and risks of reform. In particular, women's concerns about securing family provisioning and their own status fell outside the privatisation framework of entrepreneurship and economic efficiency. From another angle, the way in which women and men highlighted different kinds of knowledge about privatisation, conformed to the existing 'gender contract' within the community (Chapter 2). Although both men and women held strong opinions about whether the state farm should 'stay together' or 'split up', it was more compatible with this gender code for men to openly voice opinions about the privatisation process per se. It also appeared to be more compatible within this gender code for men than women to become private farmers, although, as discussed in the next section and the following chapter, local discourses also obscured the extent to which women were actually contributing to the new private farms.

This section has highlighted the external and internal factors which shaped the Lenin membership's decision to 'stay together' and dissuaded people from perceiving private farming as a viable option, particularly for women. The following section draws a contrast with the other communities, which opted for more radical restructuring and more people became private farmers, in order to begin to explain this outcome, both overall and with respect to gender. Specifically, what had made the difference between Lenin and Sarybulak,

where no women officially headed private farms, and Druzhba, where a significant numbers of women had become farmers in their own right?

IV. Gender and private farming on Druzhba and Sarybulak

Information, donor involvement and farming systems

In terms of external factors, access to information and donor support were two areas where the experience of Druzhba and Sarybulak diverged from that of Lenin. In both communities, a far higher proportion of informants were knowledgeable about the decollectivisation reform in general and their own rights and entitlements in particular. However, the link between access to information and support, more radical restructuring and greater involvement of women farmers was not clear-cut.

First, the fact that informants were more aware of the issues surrounding privatisation appeared to stem primarily from the fact that the process had begun earlier and had already evolved through several stages by the time I began my fieldwork. As on Lenin, there had been no proactive grassroots information campaign about restructuring. Similar controversies over information and the relationship between local authorities and farm management were widespread in all three state farm communities, irrespective of whether they had opted to stay together or split up. Whilst the 'dispossessed' made recurrent claims that local authorities and farm management had channelled information along their own insider networks in order to cream off resources and maintain their own power bases, local officials and farm directors tended to downplay the question of access to information and highlight factors such as local mentalities and/or agricultural conditions to explain why some people had not withdrawn their shares to become private farmers. Again, there was a strong correlation between the models of restructuring espoused by district or regional authorities and the models adopted by local state farms. In the Dzezkazgan region, which the government had chosen as a pilot area for rural reform, the local administration was in favour of more radical restructuring and Sarybulak was typical of the majority of farms that had followed suite. Likewise, Druzhba had initially followed the district pattern of establishing producer cooperatives. However, it had subsequently departed radically from the model promulgated by the local authority, as the producer cooperatives disbanded and more people became private farmers. A key difference between this and the other two communities was that the state farm and its individual members had been less dependent on the *rayon* authority for information. The community's proximity to Almaty meant that information was more easily available from a variety of other sources, at least to those who knew where to look for it and a far greater proportion of respondents, including women, had made trips to the land office. On the other hand, the decision to disband the first wave cooperatives was often controversial and imposed by the new management rather than chosen by their membership as a whole. Only a minority had decided, rather than been obliged, to 'go it alone' and greater access to information was therefore only a partial explanation of the high number of private farms created in the community.

Second, outside support from donor organisations was another possible variable in explaining the more radical reform. Neither Lenin nor Sarybulak received any outside aid,

either during or after restructuring. However, on Druzhba, although no assistance was given with the privatisation process itself, various forms of aid were subsequently offered to private farmers. Being close to Almaty, and being known for its 'progressive' approach, the former *sovkhoz* was targeted for technical assistance by a number of donor agencies. In particular, the EU TACIS programme piloted its private farmers support project there, which included a micro-credit scheme for farmers. The rationale behind this project was that private farms were not receiving support from government to face their many legal, credit, training and marketing problems. It was hoped that the creation of a grassroots farmer co-operative movement would help farmers to be proactive, rather than waiting for government aid. During the first stage of the project, which ended in 1996, various forms of assistance had been provided. On Druzhba, a number of farmers' groups and associations had been supported or initiated, including a general farmers association, 'Dzhuldiz', a sugar-beet growers association and several MTS (machinery) stations. One of the main instruments for fostering the development of these associations was a Farmer Credit Fund created to provide seasonal and long-term loans to private farmers. Under this joint TACIS/USAID scheme, implemented by the US non-profit organisation, MercyCorps International, credit was provided to individual farmers, provided they formed credit groups with at least five members. As of February 1996, 87 farmers had received fuel and seed under the seasonal loans scheme and 15 groups had taken out $430,000 credit to be repaid over 2-15 years. In addition, the project had also organised extension training. Twenty farmers had visited farms in Germany and Portugal to study Western farming and irrigation methods and Western sugar beet seed had been provided to local growers. Under the second stage of the project, which was contiguous with my fieldwork, the aim was to work closely with other USAID contractors to extend the model to other *oblast*s, whilst responsibility for grassroots work in the *rayon* was passed to local counterparts in the Agro National Farmers Association.

Although the donor project did provide a focus for people to discuss privatisation and resources for private farmers, its impact on the number of private farmers – specifically women farmers – was indirect. I found that only a minority of the new private farmers were aware of its existence and still fewer had actually benefited from it. The project management told me that no community-wide information and awareness-raising campaign had been conducted, since the project had limited funding and needed to restrict the number of applicants. Instead, people had come to them by word of mouth. My interviews on Druzhba suggested that the original beneficiaries had all come from the central village. They had included the 'first wave' private farmers, formerly influential members of the state farm management, and others connected to these two groups through neighbourhood, clan or other informal connections. Information about the project had mainly been passed along these people's networks and those of the local administrators. This lack of transparency meant that men and women not allied to the original beneficiaries did not get access to its resources, whilst the project itself also suffered adversely. Many of its procedures were 'hijacked' by other processes, as micro credit arrangements entered into existing relations of reciprocity and exchange that were difficult to monitor and control. As on Lenin, perceptions of cronyism and corruption also meant that the project lost out in terms of trust.

From the perspective of gender and other aspects of inclusion/exclusion, the project had not conducted stakeholder analysis or social surveys in the community and no particular attempt

was made in terms of outreach to women or other potentially disadvantaged groups. No social or gender monitoring of beneficiaries was being conducted and gender disaggregated data was not being recorded. The inclusion of women farmers in the donor project was haphazard rather than a deliberately planned outcome. Project staff pointed to one high profile case - the successful woman farmer described at the beginning of this chapter - as an example of women's inclusion, but no analysis had been made of her particular situation and how it might differ from that of other women in the community. I found that she was atypical in a number of ways. First, it was rare for a woman to have specialist higher education and technical agricultural expertise like hers. Second, she had capital to invest in the private farm from a previous enterprise, a sewing cooperative. And third, although she was concerned to distance herself from her previous status and from the *nachalstvo* in general, she was the wife of a former *sovkhoz* director, had contacts among the Kazakstani political elite and sat on the state farm's privatisation committee and therefore had more connections and influence than most women in the community. The personal example and views of this farmer herself had had no little influence on the fact that other women farmers had been included as beneficiaries in the project. On the one hand, she had passed information along her own networks, which had included women, and on the other, she had been explicitly concerned that women farmers, who 'needed to feed their families' should receive support. More broadly, her example had been instrumental in encouraging other women in the community to take up private farming. She was well known in the community and many of the women private farmers and entrepreneurs I spoke to explicitly stated that she had served as an example to them that women could run a private farm or business. As Chambers describes, 'the history of a [development project] success points to the primacy of the personal' (1992: 41). However, this personal example does not fully explain why so many women took up private farming on Druzhba, nor the existence of women farmers in other communities such as Sarybulak.

As on Lenin, external factors such as access to information and outside resources were just one of the factors shaping different perceptions of reform, as the state farm communities and their individual members tried to balance profit and risk with survival and sustainability, independence with mutuality and solidarity. The communities and different groups within them had different and increasingly divergent understandings of what the 'right' balance was, in which gender played a significant part. Referring back to the discussion in Chapter 2, I found that overall, on both Sarybulak and Druzhba, private farming was more congruent with the communities' previous discourses around state, economy, moral value and the household and also with women's roles in the local gender code.

Local farming systems, and their gender division of labour, were key determining factors in people's perceptions of private farming. On Lenin, few people seemed to feel that large-scale cereal production could be successfully undertaken by private farmers. However, in the two other communities, there was a perception that farming could be conducted sustainably and perhaps even profitably by private farmers as well as by large enterprises. On livestock farms like Sarybulak, both herding and fodder production could be carried out on a small-scale basis using household labour, and the previous decentralised production system (*koshara*) meant that people were already used to working more independently and across a broad area of expertise. Similarly, on Druzhba, where a wide variety of crops could

be grown, irrigation was possible and links with potential markets were better, private farming was also perceived more positively. In addition, for some groups, notably the Turkish, Korean and Uighur populations, subsidiary farming was already a second economy activity rather than a purely domestic one during the Soviet period. This gave them a springboard into private farming and their farms often continued their previous and relatively lucrative niche of vegetable and flower cultivation.

In both these farming systems, women had played a far more visible role in agricultural production, which was being transposed to private farming. On Sarybulak, both women and men were involved in the main activity of herding. Herding brigades were often based on family groups, which were also the recommended basis for constituting the new private farms[184]. Similarly, on Druzhba, although few women had experience of the machinery-dominated branches of work, they did the bulk of the more manual labour in sugar beet and horticultural production, both branches that could fairly readily be transferred to smaller private enterprises. In this region of Kazakstan, there was a long tradition of women's involvement in these two branches and many brigade and team leaders were women. When I asked why so many women had taken up farming in the community, women respondents often cited the fact that this agricultural experience could be readily transferred to smaller private enterprises. Others referred to their experience of managing small-scale production, saying that their private plots had made them familiar with comparable farming techniques such as seed selection and crop rotation. In the Turkish, Korean and Uighur communities, it was common for women to work primarily on their private plots rather than in *sovkhoz* production, and their predominant role in fieldwork and marketing was also transposed to the new private farms. In addition, these respondents, whose families had arrived in Kazakstan as deportees during the Stalin era also made a specific connection between land, work, autonomy and survival. In the words of one Turkish woman farmer,

> 'There in Georgia, we had land like now – a house, a vegetable plot, then further away our fields, vineyards, nut trees; and in the hills, 60 sheep and 10 cows. [In Kazakstan] it was because of the land that [my family] survived. When you know how to work the land, you know you will survive. They worked. Ploughed. Bought a cow and little by little things improved. We Turks are prepared to labour in the fields or plot – two hours before work. When I lived in Esik, I worked on the *sovkhoz* during the holidays, on sugar beet, tobacco and grapes. And we've always had a big private plot. I am not afraid of fieldwork and I am not afraid of taking land' (Turkish woman farmer, Druzhba, Fieldnotes, November 1998).

As this example demonstrates, internal, cultural sets of factors also determined how the communities – and different groups within them – perceived private farming. In Chapter 2, I drew a distinction between the Lenin, Druzhba and Sarybulak communities in terms of how they were incorporated into the Soviet development project. I argued that Lenin represented a particular symbiosis, where a strong identification with the state collective was matched by a strong identification with the private sphere.

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[184] By law, private (peasant) farms (*krestyanskie khozyaistva*) were generally to be constituted on a kinship basis (ADB, 1997: 3).

Like a Central Asian 'throat singer' whose simultaneous bass hum and high melody intertwine to produce complex harmonies, individuals combined these different regimes of value, using different idioms at different times and in different settings, but the two idioms harmonised in their stress on solidarity and reciprocity and their opposition to second economy activity. Here, private farming was perceived as inimical to this symbiosis, both to the 'public' collective and to family and kinship networks. In contrast, on Sarybulak, the scale of value tilted further towards the Kazak kin community and on Druzhba, towards the second economy. Although similar hostility to private farming as 'divisive' was also expressed in these communities, the following ethnographic examples demonstrate how it was made 'compatible' with local discourses and how these shaped the gender division of labour and patterns of ownership in the new farms. Here, unlike on Lenin, women's involvement in private farming was either not perceived to transgress the local discourse on the gender division of labour or was accommodated within it.

Share and labour contributions to private farms and models of ownership and reward

Women's shares were as vital as vital as men's to the creation of viable independent farms, which were typically created by pooling the shares of several related households[185]. On Sarybulak and in the Kazak community on Druzhba, family farms were characteristically organised by brothers together with their wives and children[186]. In the other ethnic communities, patterns of relationship were more diverse, often also including work colleagues or neighbours. In both communities, the original contributors often included a wider circle of other relatives, particularly pensioners, who were too old to farm themselves. Although a wide circle of relatives often contributed to a new enterprise, there was not necessarily a concordance between these contributors and those actually working for the new farm. In general, labour responsibilities were allocated to various 'core' households and their members, according to their age, gender and expertise. Within the new private farms, ideas about the proper disposition of age and gender roles within families were shaping both the organisation of labour and the conceptualisation of property and entitlement[187].

To take the example of one of the biggest private farms on Sarybulak, cited above. The founding members, a former *sovkhoz* shepherd and his wife, together with his two brothers, five sons, three daughters and two daughters-in-law, pooled their 300 household stock with some 300 additional stock from their amalgamated shares. The shepherd pointed out that all these contributors, both men and women, had a work record and the right to a share of *sovkhoz* assets and all had contributed to the new enterprise. The bulk of the farm work was conducted by two of the sons and their wives and children. Both households would spend the winter on the *zimovka*, looking after the livestock. The eldest son, who had formerly worked as a tractor operator, was responsible for work with machinery. The second son had specialised in horse breeding and was responsible for the stock. The eldest sons' wives also

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[185] One indicator of the importance of women's labour contribution to family farms was the number of instances I came across where women's resistance to taking up private farming had been a key factor in households' decisions not to do so.

[186] Henderson (1997) also found this agnatic principle of organisation to be common in rural Kyrgyzstan.

[187] Sneath (2000) describes a similar transposition of the folk model of gender roles and the associated division of labour to private farms in inner Mongolia.

played an important part in the running of the farm. The shepherd explained that they worked 'on the same level' (*na ravne*) as their husbands, although on different tasks. Following the traditional gender division of labour, which had continued both in *sovkhoz* and domestic production, they were responsible for feeding and looking after young animals, together with milking and the preparation and some sales of dairy products, mainly during the Spring and Summer months[188]. At various times of year, a far wider circle of kin was also involved with farming activities, including shearing, herding on the summer pasture and hay cutting. These included the brothers, the three youngest sons, the daughters and one son-in-law, together with the members of some ten or fifteen related households who occasionally worked for the enterprise in return for the provision of basic necessities for their own families and household stock. As to overall management and administration, this fell to the father. It was he who obtained the necessary inputs (*dostat'*), who organised large-scale sales of stock and fleece and who made final production decisions. He was also the official head of the enterprise and it's legal representative (*juridicheskoe litso*).

With regard to how asset and labour contributions were reflected in property rights and rewards, the term that recurred most often in people's explanations of how their enterprises operated was '*vsye ob shchee*' which can perhaps best be translated as 'everything is in common' or 'everything belongs to everybody'. As one man put it, 'It has only just happened here, this dividing up of things into yours and mine; before, everything was in common. We were taught differently and we really don't understand it.'[189] Only in one case did I come across a private farm where the members had explicitly organised as a 'mini *sovkhoz*', with an accountant who calculated individuals' work contributions and paid salaries accordingly. People would explain that nobody 'kept accounts' of who had put in what to the enterprise. Similarly, nobody was paid individually (*lichnye den'gi*) for his or her farm labour. Instead, any benefits were either divided between the core households involved in the enterprise or, alternatively people could take what they needed, often after a meeting when everybody discussed whether it was really necessary. In other words, the new private farms were generally seen in relation to family property and relations in general, rather than as a discrete economic or productive entity, with corresponding calculations of entitlements. Sneath describes this pattern as 'corporate family ownership' (2000: 182). On Sarybulak and in the Kazak community on Druzhba, this approach to entitlement and reward often extended beyond the core farm membership and into other work and leasing arrangements. Like Sveta, the Kazak woman pensioner described earlier in the chapter, those who did not have the wherewithal to farm independently frequently handed their shares over to wealthier kin or clan members (*po znakomstvu, po rodstvu*) to farm, in return for a share of the produce and rewards. In general, this was done on the basis of trust rather than contract. As one former farm specialist from Sarybulak explained:

> 'Many people hire themselves out to their relatives or acquaintances (*znakomy*). But the relationship is not one of employer, employee. It's more like the relationship

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[188] So far, most of the dairy products they produced had been for the households' own use rather than for sale. However, the following year they planned to start producing mare's milk on a larger scale to sell for profit. One of the daughters-in-law was to be in charge of this aspect of production.

[189] 'U nas tol'ko chto poshlo – eto tvoe, eto tvoe. Ran'she vsye obshee bylo. Nas uchili po drugomu. Nam ochen' neponyatno.' Interview, Teumoinak, Sarybulak 5.8.98.

> between a host and his guests. The host will never ask how many days a guest is staying. Every day, he will provide whatever the guest needs and wants. No account will be made. It is the same with the working arrangement. The host/guest relationship has spilled over. People know that they should make agreements, contracts, but it is not part of their way of thinking. So a man, his wife and their sons may work for a rich relative an entire winter, herding over 200 sheep and see nothing at the end of it.' (Sarybulak fieldnotes, 30.7.98).

A parallel can be drawn between this arrangement and the practice of 'handing back' shares to producer cooperatives or joint stock companies. In both cases, for those who were unprepared or unable to farm independently, the abstract value of land and other property had to be weighed against the wider entitlements conferred by membership of a larger group. The resulting relationship, whereby private farms supported a broad circle of kin, often in return for labour contributions, was reminiscent of the pre-Soviet form of kin labour organisation discussed in Chapter 2 and like it, had aspects of both solidarity and inequality.

In fact, the local '*obshchii*' model obscured the ways in which account *was* taken of individual contributions and the contradictions, including gender-related tensions, which existed within and between households[190]. The extent to which individuals benefited from common assets depended on hierarchies of authority and the values attached to different areas of work. Women's labour contributions were sometimes counted as 'different but equal' spheres of work, sometimes as 'help' and sometimes as 'domestic work'. The knowledge and relative bargaining power of household members of different ages and sexes also varied considerably between the different enterprises I visited.

In the enterprise cited above, all the members of the 'core households' I spoke to, including the two daughters-in-law, seemed relatively well informed about the creation and operation of the enterprise and were able to tell me about their share and labour contributions. Although, characteristically, the proceeds from their sales of butter, cream and cheese went back into the 'common' pot, both they and their husbands and father-in-law appeared to value their contribution and they had a degree of influence. They had, for example, been able to stipulate that money needed to be spent to equip the children with clothes and books for the new term. This was not always the case. On another summer encampment, the head of the enterprise, founded by five different households, presented himself as its sole proprietor, with ultimate power over all decisions regarding production and reward. They had a common purse (*kotek*), he told me, but he was the head of the enterprise, and when someone wanted something, they came to him and he would decide. As on Lenin, he made no mention whatsoever of the women members' labour contribution to the farm, saying only that they did the 'domestic work'. He presented the model of decision-making in his own household in similar terms. When I asked him about the division of authority and responsibility, he blustered that he was the head of the household, and what he said was law.

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[190] There was a similar tension on ceremonial occasions, such as weddings and funerals. Although the overt emphasis was on mutual support and solidarity, people also took careful account of help and gifts given and received. On this question, see Werner's work on the gift economy in Southern Kazakstan and Kandiyoti's (1998) research, which describes the contrast between the fluidity and apparent spontaneity of helping arrangements and the tight monitoring of reciprocity within social networks in Uzbekistan.

If his wife didn't want to listen to him, she would have to leave and find someone else[191]. As on Lenin, despite the discourse on men's dominant role within the family, women often had much greater authority than this would suggest. However, in this particular case, the young wife of the head of the enterprise did appear totally cowed and to have little say in decision-making.

Where perceptions in all three communities coincided most closely was in their normative models of authority. Headship of the family and family enterprise was generally conceived in terms of male kinship, hierarchy and obligation. On Sarybulak, the official head of the enterprise was usually the most senior male, either the father, or if he was elderly, the eldest son. This position of authority gave greater weight in decision-making, but also needs to be seen in terms of obligation or responsibility: where the senior male had retired or fallen ill, the next in line was often obliged to take control of the family farm. In terms of male-female hierarchy, although senior female kin might have the experience and skills to run a farm, local ideas of appropriate behaviour, together with the informal practices governing entitlement discussed above, often made it difficult for them to do so. For example, Fatima had worked as an assistant shepherd with her husband for many years, on winter and summer pasture a considerable distance from the central village. Unlike many shepherds, she told me, her husband had encouraged her to learn all aspects of herding. She had been completely inexperienced at the beginning, but had learned how to ride, how to herd the livestock and even how to use a rifle to kill antelope and wolves and how to set traps. She and her husband had set up a family farm, which they had run for four years, together with their eldest son and his wife. But her husband had died the previous year, and she had sold up most of their stock and handed over their land to one of the wealthiest private farmers in the community. When I met her, she was living in the central village, but had just come to an agreement with the Head of the Association to take care of a large herd of the latter's stock, which she would herd together with her own remaining animals. She would receive a wage of 50 tyn per head per month and, in return for handing over a share of the young from her own stock, would receive feed to keep her own as well as the association's livestock over the winter. She told me that she now regretted the decision to sell up the private farm. She and her husband's dream had been to be able to 'look after themselves' (*sam sebe ukhazhivat'sya*). It had been much harder work and much riskier than staying with the *sovkhoz*, because you were responsible for everything, but they had been doing well. She wished that she had carried on, but when her husband died, his kin had been adamant that this was not possible. A woman by herself, even with an adult son, could not hope to manage an enterprise alone. It was better for her to work for the association. Implicitly, in taking her on as an employee, the head of the association had recognised her skill and competence as a herder. The work she would conduct for the association would be little different from working on her own enterprise. Both involved spending most of the year in isolation out on the steppe and required considerable self-reliance. The sole major difference was that in the latter, she would have been responsible for the 'provider' tasks of obtaining inputs, whereas in the former, this aspect was taken over by the association, which therefore took her 'under its protection'. It seemed that for a woman to fulfil the 'head of enterprise/provider' role was to

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[191] "*Ya glava khozyaistva, ya reshil, ona delaet chto skazhu. Ne khochet mne slushat' – puskai! Poishchet drugogo. U nas nety takoe obychai*". Fieldnotes, July 98.

step outside the proper division of responsibilities, in some way shaming both herself and her kin, who would be seen as not fulfilling their proper obligation towards her and particularly their deceased relative's children. The equation between men's provider role and farm headship appeared to be widely shared in the community. When I asked the village administration whether there were any women-headed farms in the community, I was first told that there were none. Then, on learning that at least three women were farming on their own, I was told that a few women, who had no husband, no 'provider' (*kormilits*) did have farms, but in any case, it was their sons or other male kin who were actually responsible and carrying out the work. It also seemed particularly important that men should be seen to be responsible for the 'outside' work of negotiating to obtain inputs and find markets for produce, which often involved dealing with 'non-kin' middlemen. This aspect of local discourses around gender will be explored more fully in the case study in the following chapter and the discussions on the turn to subsistence and local constructions of the marketplace in Chapter 7.

However, the woman farmer I interviewed painted a different picture of her activities, which stressed her own power and managerial authority as well as the importance of kin. As she explained, 'When you have good, hard-working sons and daughters-in-law, then it's possible to be a woman farmer. But otherwise, if they aren't obedient, it's impossible. I'm lucky. They listen to what I say. But it's me who makes all the decisions (*razibirayus*), me who does all the deals, to sell the produce, here and further afield' (Fieldnotes, Sarybulak, 7/8/98). She told me that starting the farm had been an obvious decision: the *sovkhoz* was going down the tubes (*sovkhoz propal*) and one had to look after oneself and one's own (*nado ukhazhivat' za sebya i svoikh*). She had been an assistant shepherd and knew the work. Her husband had died seven years before, but in any case, he had been off herding all the time or drunk and she was used to taking all the decisions herself. Women's work was to milk, make kumiss and kurt and clean and wash – everything had its use, if there was time you did what had to be done. If you weren't stupid, you could do anything (*esli ne durnaya, vsye smozhesh*)[192]. As her account shows, women's headship was difficult to accommodate within the local gender code, but could be justified by the need to look after one's family and men's failure to meet their proper obligations, through physical absence or moral deficiency. Her account also highlights the difference in authority which often existed between senior women and their daughters-in-law.

On Druzhba, although many more women had become farmers in their own right, farm headship was also difficult to accommodate with local models of gender and authority. Even where women did have formal title to land, the relationship between this and their position in household and family decision-making was a complex one. Unlike the majority of social sector workers, Gulnara, the Turkish woman doctor and farmer mentioned earlier, had made a sustained effort to identify and secure ownership of her land. Not only this, she had registered her land separately from that of her husband as a different *krestyanskoe khozyaistvo*, which was very unusual. Thus, although she and her husband farmed all their

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[192] Other women in the village confirmed this picture of energy, strength and self-reliance. I was told that she had managed to get work in the shop, despite the fact that she had no specific training. Then in 1970, she had decided that her husband and herself would become shepherds, to get him out of the village and away from the alcohol.

land together, each had a separate farm registered in their own name, and each was listed as a member of the other's farm, together with their children. Her determination to own her own land was in keeping with the dynamic, decisive and competent persona she assumed at work in the clinic and her account of her childhood.[193] However, there was a contradiction between her formal land rights and autonomy and the persona she adopted within the family. Although her husband had had three strokes and she effectively managed both the farm and the household, at home she was much more 'eclipsed' than at work, deferring to her husband as the *khozyain* (head) of the household. Following their marriage, they had lived with her parents-in-law for several years. For the first year, according to Turkish tradition, she had remained silent and not spoken in their presence, as a mark of respect[194]. They then built a house in the same compound as her parents-in-law and continued to maintain close links. Gulnara had always had to temper her 'outside' independence and autonomy with 'inside' modesty and recognition of a fairly strict gendered code of behaviour. Although her role had changed with seniority and as she conferred the bulk of the domestic chores on her daughters, her family role did not fully reflect her formal, work persona. From our conversations it was clear that, despite the paltry pay, she did not want to give up her job as a doctor - which she loved and which brought her financial independence - for full-time private farming. In this case, Gulnara's positions as a doctor and as a private farmer in her own right were 'made' compatible with the local gender code by her observance of its obligations in the domestic and ritual spheres. On the other hand, like other women social sector workers, she did not perceive private farming alone as a satisfactory source of satisfaction and independence.

Women's roles as private farmers were also accommodated within the local gender code through the discourse around their work. Although women were often officially or de facto heads of farms, both men and women generally presented this as a 'secondary' activity, with men's activities, such as driving, described as bringing in the bulk of the family income. Similarly, whilst male farmers tended to speak about farming as an entrepreneurial or market-oriented activity, women farmers tended to present it primarily in terms of 'feeding the family'. As Bota described, 'The farm is my responsibility. We had to take land - with perestroika, things started to collapse and at least with land you can feed the family - mother earth will feed you'. Even Dina, who had become one of the most successful private farmers in the community, presented her activities in a markedly different way from similarly successful male respondents. Whilst she did refer to her aptitude and desire to be her own boss, she also framed her role as a farmer in terms of women's responsibilities in raising the younger generation:

> 'My farm work, for example, what's it for? People often ask me why I do it, why on earth I need so many tractors or cars. But what else would I do at this point in time. I live in the country. What am I supposed to do? Go into the town and trade cigarettes and vodka on the street? That's not my thing. I want to work. I want to act. And apart from that, I feel that my work is useful. I have an influence on other people. I am an example for the young generation. There are a lot of young people

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[193] Her father had encouraged her to study, and she had been the only Turkish girl from her village to attend a boarding school and then go on to further education.

[194] This tradition was still being followed in the Turkish community – Gulnara's younger daughter had just been 'stolen' and could only communicate with her husband's family in sign language.

> who are out of work, who get drunk all the time, a big problem with alcoholism. When they saw that I was working the land and could afford to buy myself a new car every year, they began to wonder, how can this woman (*tyetya*) work the land and buy a car? Lots of them have started to work the land now. So this farm work has a positive influence on the young. It teaches them a love for work, or if not love, then at least that you need to work to survive. I can't say I live well, but I am surviving. If you want to live better, then you have to make it happen yourself.' (Fieldnotes, 5.8.97)

I have already mentioned that, on Sarybulak, one of the obstacles to women farming independently was the perception that activities such as negotiating to obtain inputs and find markets were the responsibility of men. Although I observed a numerous occasions where Dina herself managed negotiations with potential suppliers or customers, including the owner of the local sugar-beet processing plant, she did also employ a series of male farm 'managers' (*intendent*), who conducted some of this work. In my final year of fieldwork, it was her new son-in-law who fulfilled this role. On the one hand, the 'social capital' she accrued from her position during the Soviet era had given her important contacts and skills in conducting transactions in her own right. On the other hand, as a woman, it was clearly also useful to have a man to 'front' the farm on certain occasions[195].

In our conversations, Dina often referred, implicitly or explicitly, to local constructions of gender and her relationship to them as an entrepreneur and private farmer, stressing the ways in which her work put her outside women's traditional role in the gender division of labour, but also connecting her willingness to transgress gender and other boundaries with her success in the new market environment. These two themes emerge clearly in the following transcript, which was her answer to my question as to whether she would have been running the farm if her husband were still alive.

> 'Before, I was the Director's wife. People were always at hand, at my beck and call. If the car broke down, 14 or 15 people would stop to help; just because I was the Director's wife. I didn't like all that. It was nothing to do with me as a person. It was as if I was in his shadow, as if I didn't have an identity of my own. Now, I'm the Director. It's me who finds out why a tractor has broken down and me who sends people to do the harvest. I like that. It would have been the same if he were still alive, though. He was a Party man. He always played by the rules. I like to be out in front, I'm sharp and I always see the way things are going. I plan ten years ahead. By the time other people have caught up, I'm already bored and moving on to something else. I was the first person to buy a tractor, a plough. People said I was crazy. What do you want to privately own these things for? When I was 13, I learned to drive a tractor. I was the only woman in the village who could. Then I got bored and already went on to driving a car. In the North, when I came back from studying in 1971, there were a few other women driving tractors, but no women driving cars. Here even, in the South, when we came in 1978, I was the only one. They used to make fun of me, honk their horns, drive in front of me to block my way. I remember when I was working as an accountant in Uznagach. The whole journey to work was like that – them driving in front of me and me driving in front of them.' (Fieldnotes, 5.8.1997).

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[195] I am grateful to Deniz Kandiyoti for focusing my attention on this aspect of the strategies of independent women farmers, which was an important one in rural Uzbekistan.

For Dina, breaking rules, including gender rules, was therefore a key aspect of being an entrepreneur and successfully adapting to change. At the same time, by stressing her 'personhood' instead of her 'womanhood' she risked putting herself beyond the pale, treading a fine line between belonging and exclusion from the moral community.

In some ways, this was a risk incurred by all successful rural entrepreneurs, both men and women. As on Lenin, the institution of individual, private ownership was perceived to be leading to the emergence of divisions between rich and poor, explained by the former in terms of the appearance of capitalist entrepreneurs and by the latter in terms of the re-emergence of the feudal *bais* of pre-revolutionary times[196]. I was struck by the similarities between this situation and that described by James C. Scott in his study of peasant resistance:

> 'To exploit (these) new chances for capital accumulation (...) large farmers and landlords have stripped away many of the economic and social ties that previously bound them to poorer villagers. (...) In doing so, they have found themselves operating in something of an ideological vacuum. What we observe (in Sedaka and elsewhere on the Muda plain) is an emerging capitalist agrarian class which has been steadily shedding its ties to labourers and tenants but which acts in a largely pre-capitalist normative atmosphere that makes it extremely difficult to justify the action it has taken. They are, in this sense, capitalists who are obliged to explain themselves – to justify their conduct publicly' (1985: 184).

The tension between capitalist accumulation and moral and social obligations was reflected in the way the 'big farmers' talked about their enterprises: on the one hand, they were keen to present them as dynamic, efficient, profit-oriented businesses. On the other, they were equally concerned to emphasise their role in supporting the community, stressing that 'we all help each other' or 'we are all developing together.' For example, the Director of the Sarybulak Association stressed his skills in marketing, recently demonstrated in a lucrative sale of fleeces to Turkey, and his credo that, as a private farmer, he could not work for free. On the other hand, he also emphasised his social responsibility, saying that, since he had taken people's shares, he also had a responsibility to provide them with hay, feed and so on, in good time for the Winter and services for people in need. Interestingly, he had recently organised a major feast for his *uru,* complete with traditional horse racing, similar to those which clan leaders held in the past, thereby consolidating his legal title with a 'moral' title to ownership and leadership within the community.

However, the behaviour of successful women farmers, such as Dina, was framed in gender specific terms. It was not just their membership of the 'moral community' that was at issue, but also their membership of the specific 'female' moral community[197]. The most virulent criticisms of Dina were from other women. Observing the interactions between her and other male private farmers, it seemed that she enjoyed considerable support and respect. In

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[196] In pre-soviet Kazak society, the term referred to the head of the *aul*; it is now widely used pejoratively to denote villagers who are perceived to have benefited most from reform, such as private farmers with large holdings. See Zhumalieva Z. 'Pervyi paren na derevne ezdit na belom "Mersedese"', *Karavan*. 9 May, 1997.

[197] These questions will be discussed in more depth in Chapters 6 and 7, in connection with the analysis of changing meanings of labour and social networks. In particular, her position regarding solidarity/differentiation changed considerably over the period I conducted my fieldwork.

meetings with the TACIS representatives, she was clearly the main spokesperson. Similarly, during the busy harvest period, when I accompanied her to the fields, she seemed to have an easy and comradely relationship with the other male farmers and combine operators. Her views on agricultural issues were listened to and often followed. Indeed, several times during my stay, potential private farmers came to see her from as far afield as Semipalatinsk *oblast* to ask for information and advice. Typical comments from male respondents stressed that she 'had what it took' to be a successful farmer. It was possible, of course, that men in the community talked about her in a different way amongst themselves when I was not present. Many of the women private farmers and entrepreneurs I spoke to explicitly stated that her example had been inspirational in encouraging them to create a private farm or business. However, in many cases, their respect was tinged with ambivalence about her crossing accepted boundaries, as in the following comments, where my respondents expressed mingled admiration, envy and disapproval:

> 'She is amazing, she could take on any man. She's totally ruthless. She goes for what she wants and doesn't care what people say.' (Former director of a public enterprise, now a trader, Fieldnotes 15.7.97).

> 'She is clever, cunning (*umnaya, khitraya*). She saw the situation. She was the wife of the Former Director and she took her place. She grabbed equipment.' (Woman private farmer, Fieldnotes, 1.11.98)

Former women co-workers specifically linked their claim that she had misappropriated their shares with complaints that their personal relationship with her had changed:

> 'With most women of my generation, I can talk about everything under the sun – children, grandchildren, health problems. I remember how in the sewing workshop we used to talk, to share our problems. But I can't do that with Dina anymore. Often she doesn't greet me in the street, just walks on by. What kind of behaviour is that? We're both people! Sometimes she does, sometimes she doesn't. Anyway, I feel intimidated by her now. And how her daughters have changed! Her daughter used to be such as shy little thing. And now she has become a right little madam, skirt as short as you like and cigarette in hand. Dina used to be beautiful – but she has always been called a 'man in women's clothing' (*muzhik v zhenskoi odezhde*).' (Former worker in the sewing cooperative, Fieldnotes, 10.08.1997)

If 'all labour of emotional connectedness is designated as female' (Oakley, 1985: 201), by becoming an entrepreneur, Dina was seen to have transgressed these rules of female relationship and community. Further, both she and her daughters were criticised for 'improper' female behaviour – her daughters (and through them Dina herself) for assuming the 'Russian' attributes of smoking and wearing immodest clothing and Dina for being a kind of 'false woman'. A number of respondents used a similar term, referring to her as a 'man in a skirt' (*muzhik v yubke*). So, although similar criticisms about resource grabbing were also levelled at male farmers, criticisms of Dina carried a particular gendered sting in the tail, focusing on her withdrawal from the female collective, her neglect of her proper motherly role in educating her daughters and her rejection of proper femininity. She herself recognised the gendered price she had to pay:

'I haven't been a woman for a long time, just a person. The only feminine thing about me is my sex. I have never believed that a woman should just take care of her appearance, look like a picture. I never supported that. I always saw women as people, as good upstanding people, good friends, good mothers, good housekeepers, hardworking people. But now I have become not only a hardworking person. I have started to do men's work. And I'm not a woman any more, just a person of female sex at the moment.' (Fieldnotes, 5.8.1997)

Perhaps one of the reasons why Dina felt able to transgress gender boundaries in this way was that her ambivalent relationship to the community may have given her greater freedom to pursue her own path. She and her husband had both been 'outsiders'. Her husband had been appointed *sovkhoz* Director over a locally preferred candidate, and she was extremely bitter about the reception they had received and the community's treatment of her after her husband's death. Her accounts of this period stressed her exclusion from the moral community and social support and her struggle to maintain her own and her daughters' rights and position. Other women farmers tended to present their activities in ways that were more congruent with local perceptions of women's 'proper' roles.

We can look at Dina's case and that of other women farmers in the community from two different angles: on the one hand, as on Lenin and Sarybulak, local discourses around women's 'proper' roles were an obstacle to women becoming private farmers in their own right; on the other, women's roles in 'feeding the family' provided them with an acceptable, or 'moral' way of entering market production, which, together with the farming and share allocation systems, partially explains the greater number of women farmers in the community. However, we also need to unpick the relationship between local discourse and practice, particularly in terms of the relationship between women's actual contribution to private farming and its reflection in land and property ownership and the differentiation between 'subsistence' and 'commercial' activity, which was beginning to be an important factor in the further development of private farms.

In that private farms entered into the new sphere of market and law-based property relations, gendered local discourses around authority and the value of labour were influencing the way entitlements were translated into official membership of enterprises and title to land and assets. By law, one of the steps in officially registering a private farm was to draw up a list of members and establish one of them as head of the enterprise. This gave the enterprise head and members a number of rights and obligations. In terms of obligations, each member was liable for tax and needed to contribute to their own health and social security insurance. In terms of rights, the enterprise head was the signatory to the official land title and had the right to sign financial documents and take decisions regarding the operation of the enterprise. The enterprise members were granted property rights in the enterprise, and disputes over land and property were to be resolved by the courts.

On both Sarybulak and Druzhba, I found that women's actual contributions to the new enterprises were not necessarily translated into formal entitlements. First, men, as heads of households, tended to be registered as heads of family farms, even where women were de facto acting as farm managers. Second, women's involvement in the new enterprises was not always reflected in the official membership documents. On Druzhba, practice had shifted as

legislation evolved. Initially, potential farmers needed to prove that they were able to work their land before they could set up a private farm. At this point, people tended to list all family members, including the extended family, to prove that the land would not fall into disuse. By 1998, however, the situation was rather different. Taxes were payable for each member of the enterprise, which led to under-recording. The different values ascribed to men's and women's labour, together with the fact that some women, particularly social sector workers, preferred to maintain their social rights from waged employment, was leading to a tendency to list only male kin.

At that time, formal entitlements were in many ways less significant than informal, local practices. However, as legal and market reform progressed, it was likely that official deeds of ownership would come to take on greater importance. In the acrimonious conflicts between 'winners' and 'losers', the winners were already beginning to use their possession of title deeds as a 'trump card' in their claims to entitlement[198]. Similarly, so long as households continued to farm together, the question of individual men's and women's entitlements remained in abeyance. However, in the event of a spouse's death or divorce, for example, women's lack of formal entitlement was likely to be an important issue. There was also a growing tendency for larger family farms to split into smaller ones, which made individual ownership rights a more pressing issue. As in communities such as Lenin, which opted to 'stay together', members wishing to, or being obliged to leave large family farms, would need to negotiate the terms of their departure with the head of the family/enterprise. As we have seen, gender was one of the factors influencing access to power and resources within both families and family farms.

A further point was that the official statistics on men's and women's employment in private farming that would be passed to the macro level to inform future policy, also presented a skewed picture of their actual contributions.

Table 5.5: Druzhba - figures on male and female employees on private farms.

	Number of private farms	Number of employees	Men	Women
1997	385	1300	-	-
1998	434	1100	800	300

Officials in the Akimiat told me that, although they had begun to record gender disaggregated data, the figures on the numbers of men and women working for the new private farms were approximate, based on a model estimate of three workers per farm, typically a father, son and his wife. As we have seen, this model did not reflect the complexity of actual work relations on private farms and, like local discourse, undervalued women's contribution to their operation.

On Druzhba, local discourses tended to frame men's farming as 'commercial' and women's farming activities as 'feeding the family'. It is important to distinguish between two different

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[198] For example, one farmer told me he had bought 8,000 sheep in 1992, which turned out to be someone else's share. When I asked whether he intended to compensate the shareholder, he said he had no intention of doing so, he had paid money for them and they were now his property.

aspects of this: whether ways of talking about men's and women's roles in private farming primarily reflected the 'rural gender contract' in the community or whether they also reflected actual gender patterns of labour and differences in orientation between male and female-owned farms.

By 1998, there was a growing differentiation in the community between a minority of large, commercial farms and the majority of small farms, like Bota's, where the boundaries between commercial and subsidiary farming were blurred. Before the cooperatives disbanded, only ten truly independent private farms had been established. For the majority, the decision to take up farming was part of a family survival strategy to cope with the growing uncertainties of the post-independence period. To be registered, these farms needed to produce a detailed 'business plan' for the land office. However, even if these programmes framed them as 'business enterprises,' they were also used to supply household needs. As economic and land reform progressed and problems with credit, machinery, irrigation and land complicated market production, increasing numbers of these small farms shifted further towards subsistence production. Thus, on the one hand, although men and women in this category talked about their farms in very different terms, they were not actually very different from each other. On the other hand, there were gendered patterns within these farms and between these and the larger enterprises. The family plot was traditionally women's domain and their ultimate responsibility for feeding the family was reflected in the fact that it was often women, rather than their husbands, who took primary responsibility for the family farm, whilst men took up other niche positions, for example, as drivers. However, even where men were originally involved in this category of private farm, as the balance shifted towards subsidiary farming, they increasingly tended to hand over the day-to-day running, if not the control, to the women in the household as they took up paid employment elsewhere. The category of small farms was therefore becoming feminised in a number of ways: firstly, as we have seen, by leaving them with less land and less or no equipment, the share allocation system had concentrated women farmers in this category; secondly, the sexual division of labour meant that women were often, de facto, responsible for family farms; thirdly, the exodus of men and the association of subsidiary farming with women's work was creating a growing difference in perceptions of the different types of farming, which was reinforcing a gendered division between farms.

As market relations extended deeper into the community, the existence of the new form of commercial farming was pushing subsidiary farming into a new category of 'subsistence'. Conversations with Dina and other respondents illustrated how this shift towards subsistence was changing the values people ascribed to this type of farming. In 1996, Dina explicitly referred to women like Bota as 'private farmers' (*chastniki*). By 1998, however, her views were rather different. She was making a distinction between farmers, like herself, who were 'standing strongly on their feet' and the others, who were 'merely' engaged in farming for subsistence or survival:

> 'Bota is not a proper farmer. What did she sow this year? Just a bit of grass and some barley. Anyway, the land isn't hers. It belongs to her father-in-law. And she drinks. Why are you spending time with her and the other women like her? They are just alcoholics.' (Fieldnotes, 2.12.1998)

If being a 'real farmer' meant owning land and producing for the market, the majority of farmers and most women farmers were excluded from this category. Moreover, the way these farms were valued in the market oriented discourse of efficiency and productivity, threatened to lead to a process of cumulative disadvantage.

During the crucial harvest period in 1998, Dina explained the 'new, Western' credo that was beginning to shape her own decisions:

> 'Wheat is standing in the fields unharvested because there is no combine. Say there are 5 members in your association, including yourself, one a woman with 5 children farming alone on 3 hectares - whose wheat would you harvest first? Probably your own? That's the way you do things in the West. What did I do? I harvested the woman's wheat, because I felt sorry for her. How is she going to manage with her children, with nothing to put in their mouths? And what would people say?; that you've done your own harvesting first and left hers to rot in the field? It's in the Soviet mentality to help and support each other, friends and family, not to let each other down. But I won't do it again. If I lose my wheat, that's 300 tonnes down the drain, if the other woman loses hers, it's 30 tonnes. And she would be unable to help me out if that happened. I won't do the same next time.' (Fieldnotes, 19.9.1998)

According to this rationale, it was no good helping the weakest, when they were going to go down the tubes; credit and support ought to go to the strongest, who would then help the others. Dina explicitly contrasted this 'Western' way of thinking with the 'Soviet' one and said she had learned it from the donor support project.

In effect, the donor project had deliberately chosen to focus support on the most profitable farms. The criteria for allocating credit ruled out applicants who only had sufficient land to feed the family, applicants whose farms had not been registered or who did not have title to land and applicants who had no equipment (not just a house or land) to commit as collateral for the loan. As one project manager recognised, these criteria were to some extent subverted by informal practices. At least in one case (Bota) a woman farmer with no title to land had used her social networks to obtain credit in another farmer's name. However, formally, these criteria mitigated against women farmers receiving further support. In this way, the donor support project, oriented primarily by the macro level 'transition' discourse on economic efficiency, was helping to establish and reinforce a gendered differentiation between commercial and subsistence farms.

V. Conclusions

Taking a narrow definition of privatisation as the policy of redistribution of the land and assets of state farms, I have argued that gender was a significant factor in this process, looking at: 1) the extent to which existing gender disparities within communities affected the shaping and outcome of redistribution and enterprise formation; 2) the extent to which the privatisation reform itself was producing new gender disparities and 3) how the different examples of redistribution and reorganisation compared in this regard.

The aim of land reform and farm restructuring was to redistribute land and assets from large-scale (public) state enterprises to private ownership in smaller agricultural enterprises and family farms. Its two main objectives were to increase efficiency and people's sense of 'ownership'. Each individual state farm member was to be given entitlements to be converted into property ownership and a stake in a new agricultural enterprise. However, the way reform was framed at macro level meant that the objective of increasing people's sense of ownership was in tension with the objective of increasing efficiency. As reform progressed, it was acknowledged that not all shareholders would be able to become 'efficient producers' and 'efficient production' would mean drastic reductions in the rural labour force. At local level, power relations within communities also subverted equitable redistribution, both in the initial 'ad hoc' stages of privatisation and under the new 'egalitarian' share-distribution models subsequently implemented in most communities. Both stages reflected existing socio-economic relations, and the distribution and previous inequalities of power within state farm communities were largely reproduced and consolidated as reform progressed. Farm officials, specialists and elite workers were able to take a 'larger slice of the cake' and initial differences were widening, creating categories of those who had land and assets and those who did not; those who have enough land and assets to be able to live comfortably or make a profit and those who only had enough to survive. Even in the many communities that resisted division and where these wide and evident differences were 'in abeyance' there was a tendency for power and resources to be consolidated in the hands of individual farm directors.

Gender equity was not given priority in the reform of the agricultural sector. The models of redistribution promoted at macro level contained an inherent tension between the assumption that the 'gender neutral' individual would enjoy new property rights and the assumption that families were the basic unit of society and that reforms should be structured around the family unit rather than individuals. Moreover, restructuring did not take account of the existing gender division of labour and power on state farms and within families or the ways in which local discourses might shape different constraints and opportunities for women and men. However, gender was an important element in the picture of cumulative advantage and disadvantage described above.

The systems used for calculating individual entitlements varied between communities, but all made a distinction between agricultural and service sector employees, with the latter consistently allocated lower shares. Given the previous gender structure of the labour-force, this discriminated against women, but to differing degrees, depending on the previous farming system. In mechanized cereal production farms like Lenin, relatively few women worked in public agricultural production, whereas in extensive livestock and horticultural farms like Sarybulak and Druzhba, a larger proportion of women worked in agriculture. Here, the extent to which women benefited in relation to men and certain categories of women in relation to each other, depended on the calculation system used. Systems for allocating land and property shares were also influenced by local understandings of labour and use rights. In all the communities, one of the outcomes of share allocation was that women tended to lose out on the material assets needed to create a viable new enterprise and reform therefore reinforced the concentration of technology in men's hands. Further, given their former position in formal state farm structures, women in general, with a few notable

exceptions, had less direct access to information about the privatisation process and about their rights and entitlements, less access to power than men, and therefore less opportunity to convert initial shares into real property. Those women who did become powerful private farmers were generally exceptionally well connected and well educated.

Where tenure over land and assets continued to be held by a cooperative enterprise, women theoretically maintained their individual entitlements. However, the value of individual entitlements was in question and gender was likely to be important as reform progressed. First, there was a trend towards the differentiation of shareholders and employees, as cooperatives could not employ all those who contributed to them. On farms such as Lenin, men's domination of agricultural production, together with the increasing layoffs of women, was likely to make this a gendered differentiation. A considerable proportion of non-employee shareholders were also likely to be women pensioners. Shareholders were likely to have less influence on management and less capacity to define the future of the enterprise and get their needs met than employees. Second, where cooperative enterprises were profitable and real dividends were paid, gender differentials in share allocation would take on more importance. Third, the tendency for title to be held by (male) farm directors was at best, unlikely to give women greater avenues for decision-making and influence. In communities such as Lenin, joint stock companies were conceived as a large family and the relationship to the farm director framed in paternalistic terms. In this local model of authority, access to resources was governed by hierarchies of gender and seniority that positioned the senior male as '*khozyain*' (master), with authority over women and younger men. Although this model was flexible and adaptable and did give women informal channels to negotiate around their own interests, this flexibility was not necessarily transposed into the legal arena, as many farm directors used reform to consolidate their own individual ownership of land and property. Further, the moral obligation for support and reciprocity in the Soviet and local models was being eroded by the further extension of capitalist relations. As in rural Buryatiya (Humphrey, 1998: 11), one of the key outcomes of reform was the end of the assumption that collectives would provide employment, social support and security for all, from childhood to old age. As social services were divested to other authorities and efficiency and economy became the main prerogative, it was also becoming increasingly difficult to support 'useless' workers, including women coping alone with large families, and pensioners[199].

Where large enterprises were broken down into small farms, the fact that privatisation gave women and men individual and independent title to land and assets was counterbalanced by the fact that the preferred unit was the family farm. Individuals were advised to put their shares into private farms (*krestyanskie khozyaistva)* comprising several households, generally linked by kinship. Within these farms, family structures and customs, residence arrangements and ideologies of gender influenced women's ability to hold and control land and assets. Both local ideologies of gender and the practice instituted by reform meant that land title tended to be held by household heads, usually men, who controlled and managed resources. Trade transactions with large suppliers and market outlets, in particular, were seen

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[199] See Kandiyoti (2003) for an analysis of gender, land rights and entitlement in Uzbekistan, which considers *shirkats*, the Uzbek equivalent of 'staying together'.

to be men's responsibility. In predominantly Kazak, herding communities such as Sarybulak, reform also led to the resurrection of patrilineal relationships to land and farm ownership that posed problems for women wanting to hold land on their own behalf. As in the larger cooperative enterprises, the fact that family property was framed as 'collective' (*obshchii*) rather than individual, meant that individual entitlements needed to be negotiated. Women's access to and control over land and assets varied considerably. In most cases, women put considerable assets towards new enterprises and their labour contribution was often vital. However, on some family farms, women's and men's labour contribution were seen as complementary and equal, whereas on others, men's work was seen as 'productive' and women's as 'subsidiary' or 'reproductive'. The gender division of labour and local ideologies of gender influenced these values. They were also influenced by market and land reform itself, which transferred control from the more distant 'director/patriarch' to male heads of household, and which was creating different categories of commercial and subsistence farms. In particular, local discourses were combining with the logic of market efficiency to mean that women's work in rural smallholdings was more likely to be classed as 'subsistence', 'subsidiary' or reproductive, regardless of their actual contribution to farming. Women therefore faced particular economic and cultural barriers to farming independently. However, they were also using considerable initiative and creativity in using farm restructuring to ensure the survival and development of themselves and their families.

From the case studies it is clear that a number of issues fell outside the 'narrow' definition of privatisation entirely. First, it is evident that people in rural communities themselves were using other concepts of rights and entitlements, which did not fit neatly into the privatisation model. Second, the material suggests that, to understand the relationship between farm restructuring and gender relations, we need to look beyond the simple 'political science' dichotomy between public (state) and private (non-state) spheres, to take account of a further 'private' or domestic sphere of kinship and the family. It is this I shall go on to conceptualise and discuss in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 6

The Broader Meaning of Privatisation

The previous chapter explored rural privatisation from the perspective of the redistribution of land and assets and the implication of this for men and women of different social categories in the rural communities I studied. The analysis demonstrated that, despite the 'egalitarian' principles ostensibly underpinning reform, it benefited certain groups more than others, thereby creating or consolidating divergences within communities. These divergences, both between wealthy and small landowners, and between landowners and landless people, seemed set to widen as market reform deepened. From a gender perspective, although the reform gave women as well as men the possibility to obtain individual title to land and assets, the extent to which they actually benefited was determined by the redistribution models used, the locality's agricultural profile and local and external perceptions of male and female roles.

Moving beyond the question of entitlement, the case studies also began to demonstrate the enormous difference between the ideas that were fuelling privatisation and the actual practice. The redistribution of land and assets was embedded in other processes and could not be looked at in isolation from kinship relations, household survival strategies and the restructuring of gender identities. Community responses to the state-imposed farm restructuring programme could not be understood purely in terms of the reformers' categories of state and private ownership and economic efficiency. To take account of this and to incorporate local people as actors in the current reform, analysis needed to move beyond the economic analysis of public and private sectors to consider the domestic sphere of family and kinship relations. This was essential in order to understand the gender implications of the current reforms.

To recapitulate, briefly, the arguments around the shifting boundaries between the public and private sectors of the economy and the state, civil society and households set out in chapter one: first, the mainstream approach, which has been central to the debate around the 'transition' of state socialist societies and the development policies implemented there, distinguishes between a public (state) sphere and a private (non-state) sphere of the market and civil society. It argues that the socialist state engulfed the private sphere, which now needs to be 'restored' to its proper place in order to increase efficiency and liberate individual initiative and participation (USAID, 1994; Nazarbaev, 1998). This process is presented as gender neutral (Ryrie, 1996). Second, western feminist analysis argues that this approach is gender blind in that it is implicitly built on the exclusion of thedomestic sphere of family and kinship relations. Since this is held to be the domain of women, any shift in the relationship between the state and non-state sectors of the economy and the associative spheres of the state and civil society will also impact on this invisible domestic sphere in gendered ways, which may be detrimental to women (Pateman, 1989; Einhorn, 1993). Third, research in anthropology suggests the problems inherent in applying both these analytical frameworks across cultures without sufficient attention to local gendered framings of work, leisure, exchange, difference, and power (Bruno, 1995; Pine, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2002). In the postsocialist context, 'the categories of public and private must be regarded not only as

descriptions of social organization, but also as ideological reference points according to which people perceive and interpret matters of responsibility, morality, and social identity - questions that may take on particular urgency at moments of dramatic social upheaval'[200].

This chapter lays the groundwork for the remaining part of the thesis, which focuses on the two, broader conceptualisations of privatisation as a gendered and culturally specific re-ordering of public, private and domestic spheres. It begins with a close reading of one particular private farm, which illustrates that the first definition is not sufficient to capture the processes currently taking place in the countryside, particularly from the point of view of gender and that a more meaningful analysis must take account of both the second and third approaches. Moving beyond private enterprises per se, it then draws on material from the state farm communities to explore the shifting interrelationship between households and state, market and domestic domains.

I. Complicating the private enterprise model: case study of a private farm

The case-studies in Chapter 5 sketched some of the ways in which micro-level research undermined or complicated the macro-level framing of rural reform. They demonstrated that at local level, people were often motivated by different interests and concerns to those encapsulated in the privatisation programme. This section draws on one particular fieldwork example to explore in more detail some of the ways in which the macro level model of new private enterprises was complicated from a micro-level perspective and the specific gender implications of this. In particular, I argue that this model excluded the further 'domestic' sphere of household/kin relations in which private enterprises were embedded and therefore failed to capture the specific nature of the private farms which were emerging and obscured women's contribution to their creation and functioning.

During my first visit to *sovkhoz* Lenin, I discovered that one of my host's brothers had established a private farm on the neighbouring state farm. My first 'interview' with the head, Kairat, took place during a birthday feast being held for his wife, to which I was also invited. I subsequently built up a close relationship with the whole extended family, staying for extended periods in various different households, with Kairat and Madina, with the sisters in the Lenin central village, another sister in town and an aunt in one of the outlying villages. So, what was interesting about my relationship to this particular farm was that I was able to see it in a very detailed way and particularly how it was embedded in the wider context of household and extended kin.

In my first talk with Kairat about the farm, my impression was that it operated as just the kind of commercially-oriented 'private' enterprise which the reforms hoped to produce. He told me that he had created the enterprise in 1995 and officially registered it with the authorities as a private farm (*krestyanskoe khozyaistvo*). After a false start in the first year, when he had sowed grain with disastrous results, he had moved into vegetable production

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[200] J. Pattico, Call for Papers for a proposed panel on 'Public and Private Perspectives on Society, Ideology, and Change in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union' for the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association.

and now produced mainly potatoes and carrots on 6 hectares of land near the canal. He had some technical equipment, including a lorry, a tractor and an irrigation pump. The enterprise was one of only 7 private farms set up on the former *sovkhoz*, which had reorganised as a joint stock company, and Kairat was proud of the fact that the new enterprises were more productive and efficient than the parent farm. He was happy to be 'his own master' (*sam khozyain*), able to make his own production decisions and was keen to tell me that, despite the drought, his farm was making money. The main problem was to market the farm's produce and to find credit for further development of the enterprise.

Although people generally referred to the enterprise as 'Kairat's farm,' this was something of a misnomer since, although Kairat was officially registered as its director, he was not a single entrepreneur. Two brothers and a close Russian friend were also formal members, had contributed land shares and were involved in production and marketing. As I discussed in the previous chapter, this pattern of brothers or a father and sons setting up a farm together was a characteristic one for Kazaks in my research communities. Although, by law, a private farm must be registered in the name of one person, who has formal leadership status, the actual structure was generally much more complex.

This complexity was often not formally recorded and still less so when it came to women's involvement in the creation and operation of the new private farms. As discussed in the previous chapter, the gender structure of labour in the region's farming system and the local 'normative model' for decision making combined to discourage women from becoming farm heads in their own right and to discourage their formal registration as farm members. When I asked Kairat and his partners whether their wives were members of the farm, they initially treated my question as a great joke. However, talking to Madina, I began to see that her contribution was considerable. Characteristically, the redistribution model used on the *sovkhoz* meant that, as a 'social-sphere' worker, her land share had been calculated at a lower coefficient than that of her husband and she had not been eligible to receive an asset share of machinery or livestock. However, she had received a land share, which she had contributed to the private farm and also contributed her labour on a frequent basis. Especially at the beginning, when they were just getting off the ground, she and two of the other wives had worked in the fields alongside their husbands, weeding, irrigating and harvesting. Although - now that they were able to hire workers - she did less fieldwork, during harvest time she still went to the fields most evenings, together with Kairat and sometimes with the children, to harvest carrots and potatoes. Apart from this direct involvement in agricultural production, Madina was responsible for organising the labour of the mainly female workers the farm seasonally employed (mostly neighbours, friends, relatives and former colleagues) and for selling produce from home. And not least, their household served as 'host' for the farm, which involved cooking and caring for the frequent guests - such as visiting traders and suppliers. So, although Madina's work was 'formally' invisible, she was actually making an important contribution to the private enterprise.

I also began to realise that the enterprise could not be considered in isolation. Kairat and the other male partners described the farm as the main input to their households, but when pressed for details were reticent about specifying its actual contribution of the enterprise to household income. It gradually became clear that the enterprise was actually part of what has

been termed a 'livelihood jigsaw'[201]. In other words, each of the four households directly involved were pursuing a range of different – and essential - subsistence and income-generating strategies, in which women played the major role.

With the closure of the kindergarten, Madina had been made redundant and was now putting increasing time and energy into work on the domestic smallholding, which provided the bulk of the household's meat, dairy products, eggs and vegetables and occasionally a small surplus which she bartered or traded for other goods. The task of managing the domestic economy fell to Madina, although Kairat would 'help out' with the heavier work, such as mucking out the stable and forking hay. All three of the other wives were employed 'off farm', one as a teacher and the others in the administration of the joint stock company. This work brought various benefits - the school was by then one of the few employers to pay money wages, if in arrears; and, while the joint stock company did not often pay in cash, employment did give entitlement to goods in lieu of wages and to vital social benefits, including medical care and pensions. In addition, two of the wives also occasionally traded in goods from home and one sometimes produced a particularly lethal home-brew vodka for sale. So, the private farm was only one of a range of different inputs to the households involved. Public-sector employment, the domestic smallholding and informal trade were vital alternative sources of (relatively) steady money, food and social security.

Moving beyond the four households which were officially or formally involved in the enterprise, the picture became even more complicated. A much wider circle of kin had been involved in the creation of the farm, were still involved in its operation and benefited from it in various ways. Kairat's sisters had been instrumental in establishing the farm. The director of the joint stock company had been hostile to members separating from the enterprise and had refused to hand over the asset shares that were due. It was only because two sisters were able to use their positions to obtain all the machinery, together with seed and fertiliser, from Lenin *sovkhoz*, that the farm became a viable concern. They continued to 'obtain' resources in this way on a regular basis. As I observed, they also organised sales of the farm's produce through their own networks of neighbours, colleagues and friends.

On learning that their brothers were planning to drive the lorry over with potatoes and carrots for sale, they would begin to spread the word in the village that there would be good quality produce for sale. By the time the lorry actually arrived, several days later, the village would be primed. The men would leave the women in charge of the proceedings. Kairat would decide whether goods were to be available for barter, but apart from this, the eldest sister acted at her own discretion in setting prices, generally after checking with a friend, now a trader, as to the current prices in the local town. The sale would take the good part of two hours - time 'stolen' from the sisters' official jobs in the Lenin farm administration. Later, the

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[201]. This term was used by Wheelock, Ljunggren and Baines (1999) in their comparative analysis of rural entrepreneurs in Norway and England. They suggest that behaviour is rarely 'enterprising' in the individualistic sense put forward in small business policy, but that small enterprises are more usually part of a 'jigsaw' of livelihood sources for rural households. The construction of such 'jigsaws' takes place within the household and draws on individual and community understandings of what is right and expected of women and men when it comes to income generating and caring responsibilities. As such, it draws on existing gendered power relations, but may, on occasion disrupt them. These insights inform the discussion in this section and its development in chapter 7.

sister who lived in the local town would take charge of sales there, using her networks in a similar way. So, while the four men formally involved in the farm were responsible for long-distance sales, on the markets in Karaganda and further afield, along with local sales to formal structures such as wholesale dealers, close female kin were largely responsible for local and informal sales of produce. These two areas were associated with specific moral values and meanings. Local sales were felt to be less lucrative but more secure, being based on existing relations of trust and solidarity; on the other hand, the market was seen as a cut-throat arena where one was likely to be cheated. The brothers' accounts of their travels were heroic tales of confronting an alien outside world, pitting their wits and daring against the 'immoral' middle-men who produced nothing of their own and returning with money for their families.

Moving even further outward, the fact that Kairat had been able to bypass the Farm Director to get the good land he wanted and to get the farm registered at all was at least partly due to the influence of high-placed relatives and connections in the *rayon* and *oblast* administration. As he put it, 'you need both a good head and connections to make it as a private farmer'.

These connections were not built up by Kairat himself, but developed by his parents through everyday and ceremonial acts of hospitality and exchange. As discussed in chapter 2, the 'ritual economy' of feasting and gift exchange was a particular feature of the Kazak community, involving long-term strategies of building solidarities through reciprocities and mutual indebtedness. Kairat's parents had invested a good deal of energy in nourishing their household's social networks, his father through his position as head accountant and his mother through managing ritual obligations with kin, neighbourhood and community. The wife of a key *oblast* official had been adopted into the family on the death of her mother and put through college at its expense[202]. The *rayon* Akim had come to the farm as a young specialist and had been taken under Kairat's father's wing - eating at the family's home most days. Kairat's mother had rarely cooked for less than 15 people for lunch. So, although Kairat's parents had come to live on a 'Russian' *sovkhoz*, they had maintained strong links with the Kazak community on Lenin and further afield, on which Kairat was able to draw in founding the private farm. This resource was a key advantage in terms of start-up and viability over the majority of Russian private farmers in the community.

So, the first 'complicating' factor to emerge from my fieldwork was that the model of individual entrepreneurship did not fit the actual situation. In the context of rural Kazakstan, the creation and functioning of the new private enterprises could not be understood without taking a much wider perspective and looking at the ways they were intertwined with and reliant on kin relationships beyond the individual entrepreneur or even household itself. In terms of gender, the individual entrepreneurship model obscured women's contribution to the emerging private enterprises and marginalized the other household survival strategies in which they played a crucial role. This was especially true in communities such as this one,

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[202] See Humphrey (1998: 343-7) for a more detailed discussion on how kin networks were used in economic and political manoeuvring in another former pastoral regional of the USSR. She suggests that, in rural Buryatiya, adoption was a strategy employed especially by 'career officials' in order to widen their circle of kin and acquire control over labour resources by getting people placed in the division of labour in positions complementary to their own.

where women were rarely registered officially as heads or members of private farms and their labour was therefore informal and 'invisible'.

The 'privatisation model' also assumes that the new enterprises will be profit or market-oriented. This was certainly the way that Kairat presented the farm to me initially. However, when I began to investigate further, it became clear that this was only part of the picture. Like the majority of the private farms discussed in the previous chapter, this one actually had a dual orientation - both towards market production and towards subsistence. Although it did produce food for the market, much of the produce was not actually destined for outside sale but for direct consumption by both the four households officially involved and a much wider circle of kin. It fact, it was impossible to consider the private farm in isolation from this wider network of kin and the interdependencies this involved. The sisters and other kin, viewed the farm primarily as an 'extended family resource': a source of food, particularly in times of trouble, such as the drought which had struck the region two years running, and for more vulnerable family members, such as the youngest sister, unemployed and pregnant, and the divorced sister with a child to support. For both the extended families of the male partners and the extended families of their wives, the farm was therefore primarily part of a wider network of kin reciprocities.

This situation set up conflicts and tensions: between commercial and kinship orientations, between the extended family and the four households directly involved as partners in the farm and between and within these four households themselves. Who was the farm 'for'? Was it a profit-making, commercial enterprise or part of a kinship survival strategy? What was the place of money and other exchanges? What was the value of the different contributions and how should they be rewarded?

These conflicts were increasingly evident in the day-to-day running of the farm. One of the signs of this was the increasing tension over the meaning of work for the enterprise. Two of the main issues were what - or whose - activities should be classed as work and how work contributions should be measured and rewarded. What seemed to be emerging was a growing tension between two concepts of work: first, work as a commodity, whose quantity and effectiveness should be measured and rewarded accordingly in the interests of the efficiency of the enterprise; and second, work seen as part of a whole, as just one contribution to household and kin strategies, which could - and indeed, should not - be measured in terms that would split household and family unity or disrupt long-term kin reciprocities. Here we can see both how values and practices connected with kinship and ethnicity were shaping work practices and how market values were beginning to penetrate and undermine values based on kinship and solidarity.

Let me explain what I mean with some concrete examples. As Kairat admitted during my last fieldwork visit in 1998, production decisions were not based on 'efficiency' criteria alone and, as head of the enterprise, this was causing him increasing problems. Until then, he had been dividing subsistence produce and the cash or goods from sale of the surplus produce equally amongst the four households directly involved. His major headache was his eldest brother, who had taken to drink and was doing less and less work for the farm. In the interests of the enterprise, he would have liked to have paid him a smaller share. However,

he felt obliged to put family solidarity above efficiency considerations and to continue to reward each member equally. In addition, according to Kazak custom, as the middle brother, he told me he was traditionally bound to defer to his eldest brother, and to act against this in his capacity as head of the enterprise would be strongly criticised by the extended family. So, production decisions had been shaped and circumscribed by kin commitments and authority relations within the family - as Kairat was increasingly coming to feel, to the detriment of the enterprise[203].

However, kin solidarities were being increasingly stretched by the existence of the enterprise. Although, as discussed in the previous chapter, everyone associated with the farm expressed the idea that 'we do everything in common' (*vsye obshchee*) and that 'we do not measure individual contributions', there were now increasingly bitter wrangles over which of the four men worked harder and who was actually pulling their weight. Each thought that he was working the hardest but that the others were being paid better. Similarly, amongst the extended kin, there were increasing complaints about some family members receiving preferential treatment and others being passed over when produce was given out. So, although relationships within the enterprise continued to be expressed in the idiom of kinship, their content was in the process of changing.

One incident in particular shed light for me on the way in which gender ideology was operating to make the women the upholders of the kinship idiom and the 'glue' holding the enterprise together. I was sitting in the kitchen with Madina and one of Kairat's sisters, drinking tea and talking about the farm. Madina was explaining how she and two of the other wives had worked alongside their husbands in the fields and how hard it had been. She said that for her, it was natural to help with the private farm, it was just one of the things that were there to be done, like looking after the family smallholding and taking care of the children. She helped her husband and he helped her. They didn't keep count. She said that Kairat had asked her if she wanted to become an official member of the farm, but she had said no[204]. Why would she? The only reason to do so would be if she did not trust him. She went on to say that the youngest brother's wife, Aigul, was the only one who hadn't done any work in the fields. Yes, Kairat's sister interjected with some disapproval - she thought she ought to be paid for her work like the men. They both went on to criticise her for this: she thought her work was so valuable that she should be paid for it, did she? She was too big for her boots. She didn't realise that her contribution to the household was worth nothing in comparison to what her husband brought in through the farm. She only worked short hours

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[203] On Lenin, one of the only private enterprises, a shop, was purportedly bankrupted because its head gave too much on credit or as gifts to his many relatives in the community. In the village, he was often praised to me for his solidarity.

[204] There is an interesting dichotomy here between the way that Kairat dismissed my questions about his wife's membership in the farm and his wife's insistence that they had discussed her membership: I concluded that this was a good example of how the 'gender contract' operated in different circumstances and of how men and women represented it in different ways. On the one hand, there had been a change in my own status between the two interviews: when I spoke with Kairat, I was a newcomer and outsider, whereas when I spoke to Madina, I was more of an 'insider,' who could be party to more of the actual workings of relationships. On the other hand, Kairat and Madina stressed different aspects of the 'gender' code, Kairat, that of male authority and Madina, that of mutual dependency and trust.

and brought in 1,200 tenge a month[205]. She didn't appreciate how hard Mischa worked and the fact that everything in the house, including her precious TV, had come from him. The only thing that she had brought in her dowry was the wall unit (*stenka*). And she was greedy and grasping and wanted new things all the time. Given the sheer vituperativeness of the criticism, Aigul was clearly breaking important norms, as follows:

First, for a wife to bring up the idea of payment for labour 'for the family' was clearly unacceptable behaviour, even in the context of a private enterprise. Although agricultural labour was organised and rewarded according to relations of reciprocity rather than on a contractual basis, there was a further gender distinction in the division of rewards. Although Kairat talked about sharing the produce and profits equally among the four households, it was primarily the men's work which counted. The women's work was classed as subsidiary 'help'. Aigul's behaviour in asking for an individual, monetary appreciation of her contribution was heavily criticised, not just because it was a direct challenge to the kinship-based organisation of labour, but also because it transgressed women's proper position within it.

Second, the fact that the criticism was framed in terms of Aigul's failure to recognise Mischa's primary, breadwinning role takes us to the 'rural gender contract' created by the accommodation between indigenous and socialist practice and values. One of the main signs of the changing relationship between the *sovkhoz* and the household was the erosion of the 'male wage' - both through increasing layoffs and because work for the joint stock company was paid in kind, if at all, and was therefore bringing less and less financial benefit. On the other hand, women working in the social sector were, along with pensioners, some of the few to be paid in money. This shift, which will be explored in more detail in chapter 7, threatened men's position as main breadwinner and heads of household and undermined the gender contract. I found that women's reaction to this was often to collude in shoring up their husband's identity, by downplaying their own contribution to the household economy and emphasising their husband's, in an attempt to 'keep the order of things'. This seemed irrational, but made more sense when I looked at what the undermining of the main underpinning of men's role and sense of identity meant for many women. Kairat's sister was a case in point. Since her husband had been made redundant, he had become increasingly depressed and had opted out of his household responsibilities, which was a source of great humiliation and shame for her. As she explained to me, she had a man at home - so called - but what was the use of him? She had to run around all over the place, getting coal and hay. This was much more difficult for her, because it was usually a man's job and they negotiated deals over bottles of vodka. She couldn't do this and the men mocked her all the time,

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[205] In 1997, the exchange rate was approximately 75 tenge to the US dollar. For the oblast as a whole, official statistics put the average monthly income for state enterprise employees at 6210 tenge, for A.O. employees, at 8265 tenge and for private farmers, at 1595 tenge. However, a survey of 624 households conducted in August 1997 found that household's average money income was 4246 tenge per month, but varied from 5070 tenge in the towns to 2217 tenge in rural areas. In many sectors, people had not actually received money wages. Over 47% of those surveyed were living below the household minimum threshold of 3449 tenge per month. On the other hand, enterprise directors and individual entrepreneurs could have a monthly income of 14,000 tenge. Figures from 'Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Karagandinskii oblasti 01-09-1997', Staticheskoe Agenstvo Respubliki Kazakstana, Karaganda, 1997.

saying, 'was she a man herself' or 'didn't she have a real man at home?'. Apart from Aigul, the other wives therefore saw one of the functions of the private farm as to reaffirm their husbands' role as provider, rather than as an opportunity for themselves formally to become entrepreneurs. So, within the enterprise, gender ideology was operating to locate men and women differently in relation to the market and domestic spheres and Aigul's behaviour in asking for a monetary appreciation of her contribution was a direct challenge to this pattern.

Third, criticism of Aigul also focused on the fact that she was 'greedy' (*zhadnyi*) and selfish and thought about consumer goods all the time. In actual fact, at other times, the other women were equally fascinated by this topic and could talk endlessly about the new 'status symbols' such as linoleum for the floor or a wall unit, their prices and where they could be obtained. As I suggested in the previous chapter with reference to Druzhba, this was often a criticism levelled by women at other women who were 'distinguishing' themselves by engaging in trade or entrepreneurial activity. Equally vituperative criticism was levelled at women who were trading in liquor and clothes and perceived to be making money from their activity. On other occasions, Kairat's sister also berated Madina herself for being greedy and persuading Kairat to stop sharing the proceeds of the farm. This, I think, is the crux of the issue. In a microcosm of what was happening in the community at large, the private farm was heightening the inequalities between the individuals and households who were involved in relations of mutual support. As such, it was putting strain on these relationships at a time when the erosion of public support in the form of wages and services was making them increasingly vital – at least for some members of the family. By evoking the 'greed' and 'selfishness' of the new entrepreneurs, people were bringing them into the normative atmosphere of the moral economy, asserting the 'proper' limits of individualistic and money-making behaviour and the claims of love, kinship and solidarity. What particularly interested me about the example of Aigul was the light it shed on the gendered aspects of this process. The underlying tensions between the farm as commercial enterprise and the farm as family resource were largely played out not between the men but in emotional conflicts between sisters-in-law or between sisters and sisters-in-law. One way of looking at this is to see it as masking conflict between male kin, which would be too disruptive and dangerous, and so is 'displaced' as conflict between women.[206] Just as women's 'invisible' productive labour was actually an important contribution to production as a whole, their invisible 'emotional' labour 'contained' or 'managed' the underlying contradictions and was therefore vital to the survival of the enterprise and of family solidarities.

The question was, for how long? In 1998, the sisters no longer received shares of the harvest, as Kairat decided that the farm could no longer support the whole extended family on a regular basis. In turn, they were beginning to 'account' for their own contributions to the farm, and were extremely upset that their work was not recognised. It was in this year that they told me for the first time about their involvement in the start-up of the enterprise. Rather than deflecting deeper conflicts onto conflict with their sisters-in-law, they were also beginning to criticise their brothers themselves, contrasting their own attitude that they 'would jump out of their skins' for their brothers, with their brothers' neglect of them. Of

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[206] I am grateful to Frances Pine for drawing my attention to this aspect, which is an important one in the Polish villages she has studied.

course, they were busy, but they no longer made the effort to come to see them, not even for birthdays and other celebrations that had always been so significant before, they said. The farm, and the profit relations it had introduced, was perceived as an undermining, foreign element in relations of reciprocity. Whereas relations of reciprocity remained important for the sisters, who were respectively divorced and single, they were becoming less so for the brothers. With the increasing commercial success of the farm, the latter could now buy in hired labour and were no longer so dependent on the extended family. My fieldwork therefore captured a particular moment in the creation of the new enterprise, as its initial reliance on kinship reciprocities shifted towards greater reliance on market relations. However, this is not to say that Kairat's farm and others in my research communities will necessarily end up 'fitting' the macro-level model of entrepreneurship and private enterprise. As other research has demonstrated, this model is in itself flawed, even in relation to Western society, and it is likely that the domestic sphere will continue to influence its further evolution in specific ways (Wheelock, Ljunggren and Baines, 1999).

What we can conclude is, to understand the nature of private enterprises in rural Kazakstan, and especially to get a fuller picture of women's role in their creation and functioning, it is important to look a good deal further than the idea of an individual entrepreneur, driven by ambition, establishing a business for profit. As this brief discussion shows, the mainstream approach to reform adopted by development agenciesfails to capture the specific ways in which private enterprises are bound up with the state and domestic domains in postsocialist societies such as Kazakstan. On the one hand, private enterprises and households continued to rely on the successors to state farms for inputs and services. On the other, one of the impacts of government reforms in Inner Asia has been to strengthen the economic importance of kinship relations (Humphrey and Sneath, 1999: 137). As collective and state farms relinquished ownership of livestock and other rural resources, the family was playing an increasing role in productive activity. However, since families were not clearly bounded units, but part of a network of social obligation, private farms such as Kairat's also entered into wider relations of obligation and reciprocity. At the same time, they represented the entrance of new market and commercial relations into families and social networks. As such they were also disrupting and shaping family and kin relations in new ways. The idiom of kinship was masking the emergence of new forms of inclusion and exclusion, visibility and invisibility and inequality. However, commercial relations were introducing new ways of valuing family members' labour and other contributions, stretching generalised relations of reciprocity to breaking point and heightening the differences between haves and have-nots within the extended family. Gender ideology was playing a key role both in keeping these contradictions from rising to the surface and in structuring new working and social relations.

The gender implications of changing forms and meanings of labour and social networks will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7. The next section moves outwards from the private farms to set them in the context of the wider changes that the emergence of the market has brought in the relationship between households and the state.

II. Restructuring and the emergence of a new market sphere

The example of Kairat's farm demonstrates that economic reform was resulting in a confrontation between the new capitalist values and practices and those that emerged from the accommodation between pre-socialist society and the socialist development concept. Existing household strategies based on a combination of public-sector employment, the domestic economy and long-term systems of reciprocity and exchange were colliding with the new model of the economy and entrepreneurship, which stressed individual labour and remuneration and immediate money transactions between market actors with no future social obligations to each other.

The growing importance of commercial and profit-related priorities and the erosion of relations of solidarity point to a growing consolidation of the 'new' market sphere. In all three communities, money and market transactions were beginning to intrude into more areas of daily concern, finding their way into relationships and transactions where they would not previously have played a role. Even on Lenin, where resistance to market reform was most evident and few people had established independent private farms, the division between those with money and those without was becoming as significant as the divisions between kin/non-kin, and those with and without access to *blat*. As one man put it: 'Money is the most important thing now. Having connections is not as important as having money' (*Seichas den'gi, svyaz ne tak vazhna kak den'gi*)[207]. Privatisation meant that some previously free public services now had to be paid for. This was the case for much of the higher education available in the nearest cities, Karaganda and Akmola, especially in the new and upcoming areas such as business management, law and economics[208]. Closer to home, on the *sovkhoz* itself, schoolbooks were no longer free. In 1998, a complete set of books cost 900 tenge for first year pupils and up to 2,000 tenge for pupils in the 11th class. Similarly, all medicines, apart from children's vaccinations, now had to be paid for. Even in the district hospital, most drugs and all the bandages, gauze, cotton wool and other such supplies had to be obtained and paid for by sick person's family themselves[209]. With little petrol available in the community, the ambulance had to be paid for too – when it was available, since the drivers often used it to do jobs on the side. Moreover, perhaps unsurprisingly in view of the low wages in the education and medical sectors, bribes were often essential[210]. In these

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[207] Vodka was initially the medium of exchange. In order to obtain certain kinds of help from 'useful friends' (*znakomye*) and even neighbours and kin, it became necessary to 'pay' a standard rate in bottles of vodka. In 1998, cash was being used more directly. See Hivon (1994) for an analysis of the use of vodka as a medium of exchange in rural Russia.

[208] After the closure of the *sovkhoz* kindergarten , childcare facilities were no longer available on Lenin in any case. However, elsewhere, pre-school education was also one of the first areas to introduce fees. In the neighbouring town, two kindergartens had closed and, as of 1998, the remaining one charged fees of 2,000 tenge per month.

[209] In many cases, there is now a division between state and 'private' fee-paying healthcare in the same hospitals or clinics. In the maternity hospital in the nearest town, those who can afford it can pay for beds on a private ward, where husbands may stay with their wives, babies are kept with their mothers and the nurses wash the nappies. In 1997 on the public ward, there was often no light, no hot water and nowhere for the women to wash themselves. The mothers had to wash their babies' nappies themselves in cold water.

[210] Before the *sovkhoz* hospital closed in 1998, the doctor had been replaced by a nursing sister, whose main function seemed to be to give out sick notes in return for a bribe such as a box of chocolates. At a much more serious level, my host told me that one of her sisters had got septicaemia as a result of an

circumstances, people were increasingly turning to home-produced remedies and other forms of self-treatment. The market was also 'upping the ante' for households. With the influx of consumer goods and the appearance of advertising and Western television serials, having 'the right clothes' and products was becoming increasingly important. This was especially noticeable in the local town, Molodezhnyi, where fashion and consumer goods were becoming markers of social differentiation. At *Pervyi Zvonok* the celebration of the first day of the new school year, several teachers and parents pointed out the striking difference between the poorer children and the expensively dressed children of the *chelnoki* (shuttle-traders). On Lenin itself, where social differentiation through the use of consumption-related status symbols was less noticeable, there was no longer a school uniform and children often asked for expensive consumer goods. In August 1998, Kulande, a recently widowed mother told me that, because of the increasing competition between children, she had felt obliged to spend a fifth of her family allowance on black jeans for her son. This was both a question of status and of playing a proper role in social networks and the gift economy, something which was becoming increasingly difficult for poorer households such as hers. To mark *Pervyi Zvonok,* mothers held one or several feasts to which relatives and female work colleagues were invited. The guests brought clothes and school materials, which were now expensive and a major headache for many households. However, relationships of solidarity built around work units were beginning to fracture. On the one hand, Kulande's entire work collective had been made redundant and no longer participated as a unit in the *Pervyi Zvonok* feast. Having limited resources, she was also unable to hold a feast for relatives and had not been invited to any other feasts. On the other hand, within the surviving work-based networks, women whose children were already grown up were starting to begrudge giving, on the grounds that they would not receive an 'equal' gift in their turn and unequal access to resources was also complicating participation. Even obtaining a gift was now a difficult undertaking in itself, requiring access to relatives in town or money to purchase goods from the traders who visited the village or women in the community who traded from home. Those with the least resources to contribute were therefore excluded from the social networks that could provide mutual support[211].

In fact, as well as eroding or replacing existing structures and strategies in some areas, market reform was paradoxically reinforcing them in others. For some, subsidiary farming and social networks were providing a springboard into market activities. For many, market reform was restoring them from their role in enhancing household status and well-being during the late socialist period to their original primary function of ensuring subsistence, and in the case of the moral economy, security and a level of protection against subsistence failure. Notwithstanding the different patterns of 'restructuring', in all three communities, the majority of households were increasingly turning to the domestic economy and to kinship networks and other solidarities as a 'buffer' against the inroads of the market. Even on Druzhba, which had the highest number of private farms, the domestic economy was

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operation and had almost died because they had not realised that they needed to give the doctor a bribe. Only when they brought a sheep, and ten sacks of potatoes, carrots and cabbage from Kairat's private farm did she begin to receive proper treatment. Another woman on the ward had apparently paid $200. These kinds of stories were very widespread.

[211] For a detailed analysis of the changing role of the gift economy in postsocialist Kazakstan, see for example, Werner (1997b).

essential to household survival and kinship and community solidarities were important, both as a practical way of managing land, and as a value system which was evoked to explain or justify new market-based economic practices. Market and domestic spheres were therefore intertwined in specific ways that did not fit easily into the existing categories used in framing rural reform.

III. Restructuring and the collapse of the public sphere

Beyond the primary meaning of the farm restructuring process discussed in the previous chapter, decollectivisation was embedded in wider processes of change, which were of more immediate concern to people at the grassroots in rural communities. In Chapter 2, I argued that the accommodation of indigenous society and state socialism had produced a specific interrelationship between households and the state in rural areas in Kazakstan. On the one hand state and collective farms had shaped patterns of working, socialising and conducting family life. The *sovkhoz* had created a 'public domain' which provided employment, and services and shaped people's values and identities. On the other hand, despite the changes in structures and values brought about by state socialism, the private domain of households, together with kin and other support networks, continued to play an important role in people's lives. During the Soviet period, rural households were 'multiple-income management units' (Dragadze, 1998) where the judicious deployment of household members in wage-earning and self-provisioning activities was important to household well-being, as were the cultivation of broader networks of friends and kin, who could provide favours such as loans, hospitality and residence permits. Current reform needs to be put in the perspective of a shift in this interrelationship.

In practice, the experience of my fieldwork communities was not one of the withdrawal of the state and the emergence of a new sphere of private enterprise and civil society, but primarily one of withdrawal and collapse and a corresponding shift towards reliance on the domestic economy. This change was graphically reflected in the landscape of the communities themselves, the disappearance of public services evident in the state of public buildings such as the kindergarten, hospital, cultural centre and state shops. From this perspective, my experience in rural Kazakstan was an interesting counterpoint to Sigrid Rausing's work on the physical experience of 'de-collectivisation' in a village in Estonia, where change was reflected in the restoration of the church and manor house and the emergence of a new café (Rausing, 1996). In all my research communities, one of the most evident signs of change was the abandonment and increasing dilapidation of public buildings. This was especially the case for Lenin, where the kindergarten, guesthouse and four state shops lay disused and boarded up, the new cultural centre stood half-finished and raided for materials, even the hospital had closed and the streets were filled with uncollected garbage. This collapse of public spaces and services was one of the aspects most frequently referred to by villagers as symbolic of the current changes in their lives. Far from bringing about a (re)birth of private enterprise, rural reform was seen as causing the loss or death of an important dimension of community life. 'Chechnya without the bombs' was how one respondent described the landscape of the community, whilst many referred to the fact that the *sovkhoz* was 'dying and would soon be dead'. This was experienced as a sense of deep loss by people in the village, as a change in priorities in many ways aberrant and explained to

Households tried as far as possible to be self-sufficient, particularly as far as food was concerned, buying only tea, sugar, macaroni and sweets for entertaining, on a regular basis. With the closure of state shops and transport services, it was now difficult and expensive to get to the nearest town, and people were heavily reliant on home-grown food. Over the summer, cows gave a good yield of milk, which could be separated to produce cream for making butter and sour cream. Households could also hope for one or two calves to rear per year. A proportion of these dairy and meat products could be sold or bartered and some stored for consumption over the winter. Apart from the cattle, Kazak households often had horses, which were let loose to roam in the steppe, sheep, often looked after by relatives on the *otdeleniye*, and hens and geese. During the short growing season, all household members helped with the subsidiary plot, where they grew potatoes, cabbages, pumpkins, onions, peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Over summer and early autumn, vast stores of salads and preserves were laid down in underground store-rooms to last until the following spring. However, in 1997 and 1998, households were forced to purchase what they needed since the drought had wizened the home-grown crops on the stalk and led to bush fires which had all but destroyed the hilly area where people traditionally went to collect berries for jam.

Although households tried as far as possible to live self-sufficiently from their family smallholding, this alone was not enough to ensure subsistence, especially since it relied partly on inputs from the former *sovkhoz*. In fact, on Lenin the further disintegration of the *sovkhoz* was putting the future even of family smallholdings in doubt. In 1998, the disastrous harvest meant that the enterprise was unlikely to be able to meet its commitment to provide hay to all its members. As one respondent calculated, one tonne of hay cost 3,500 tenge and one cow needed three tonnes of hay for the Winter, a vast sum of money for most households, even those where one or several family members were employed in the service sector that was still paying money wages[213]. Moreover, the smallholding could not generally provide the extra income needed to cope either with unplanned emergencies such as illness, or planned strategies such as obtaining further education for children.

In these circumstances, households were backing up the smallholding in other ways: with state benefits, production of handicrafts, trade, community reciprocities and migration strategies. For many households, pensions and child allowance, although meagre and often paid many months in arrears, represented the sole possibility of getting money in a virtually cash-less local economy. By 1998, pension day was the centre of the local micro-economy, as traders who had previously visited the central village once a week now came only on pension day or when the teachers were paid. Pensioners were therefore becoming family 'resource persons', often contributing directly to their children's households by paying for coal, hay and food.

Trade was also an important household survival strategy, although the profile of trade on Lenin was very different from that on Druzhba, reflecting the two communities' relative distance from markets and availability of transport, as well as local attitudes. On Druzhba, commerce and trade were a new boom phenomenon. A busy daily market had sprung up outside the former state shops, which had themselves been taken into private hands and the

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[213] For example, two teachers salaries would bring in around 10,000 tenge per month.

Sunday market, which had existed in Soviet times, was busier than ever. One of the particularly striking features of this new and highly visible phenomenon was the overwhelming predominance of women. On the daily market, all the small stalls, selling cheap imported clothing from China, toiletries, stationery, tea and vodka, were run by women. On the weekly market, women also predominated in commodity vending, with men more evident in the sales of farm produce, particularly meat and livestock, and in specific sectors such as car parts and machinery. Surveys of trade in the Almaty area found this to be a typical pattern[214]. At this time, a spate of newspaper articles was also exclaiming over the *chelnoki* or shuttle trade phenomenon, with many people, again particularly women, leaving on 'shop-tours' to Pakistan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, where they bought goods in bulk for sale back in Kazakhstan[215]. In contrast, on Lenin, although trade was also seen as largely 'women's affair' it was mainly invisible, conducted via relatives, neighbours, friends and colleagues on the *sovkhoz* and beyond it. A few households with access to their own transport sold meat from their smallholdings on the market in Karaganda. More sold produce to visiting wholesale traders and most occasionally bartered eggs, milk or butter from the smallholding against macaroni or tea from visiting commercial traders. Some women in the community also produced home-brew vodka for sale to other villagers. In 1996, a dozen women went on regular 'shuttle-trade' trips to Almaty, but by 1998, this had become too expensive. On the other hand, three households in the central village had turned part of their home into a 'shop', supplied by relatives living in the local town. A final strategy was temporary – or permanent – out-migration for paid employment. It was common for at least one household member to go to live with relatives in order to get work in the nearby town, either in the open cast coal mine or in public services and new market enterprises. For young men and women in the community, this was now the major hope of employment.

The importance of social networks in migration strategies and trading alerted me to their changing roles. As well as being more dependent on the domestic economy, households were also increasingly reliant on these kinship and other support networks, to fill in the gaps left by state support as well as to develop market activities (Humphrey and Sneath, 1999: 136). To cite Piraiinen again, although households might appear to be autarkic and self-sufficient. 'this increased independence from the official society and economy would not (...) be possible without an embeddedness of the household in a fabric of kinship and community relations, characterised by a sense of mutual responsibility'. As the Soviet state has dissolved, and with it the social contract (...) between society and its members, solidarities that may be defined as more 'traditional' have replaced the former solidarities between individuals and official Soviet society' (1996 : 10).

At household level, these networks were manifest in a number of areas. Work-based networks could be called on to get information about where to obtain goods at the best prices or who might be willing to barter a horse for some sheep. At the same time, households

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[214] Drawing on a longitudinal study of flea market and collective farm market trading in Almaty in 1996 and 1997, Gulsum Myrsagalieva found that on average, women comprised 72% of vendors at the two markets, more specifically 80% of flea market vendors and 65% of farm market vendors. They also comprised the majority of street vendors[214].

[215] See for example "Dazhe s maslom gorek khleb "Chelnokov"" in Karavan, No. 44, 30.10.98; website http://www.caravan.kz/1998/10/44/44-08-0.htm.

maintained close links with their neighbours. Now that electricity was erratic and often cut off altogether, those with outside bread ovens would bake bread for several neighbours. If someone's cucumber or tomato crop had perished, another neighbour might have a surplus. Particularly during preparations for winter, when households had to find alternative sources for the fodder, fuel and other goods no longer provided by the *sovkhoz*, kin and other networks were the scene of frenetic chains of exchanges. Relatives on the *otdeleniye* often helped households in the central village by pasturing their sheep and getting hay for their smallholdings 'on the side'. On the other hand, the increasing difficulties with transport meant that relatives from the *otdeleniye* often stayed over when they needed to do business in the centre or on their way to or from town. In fact, particularly in the summertime, households became much more elastic entities altogether, with considerable coming and going between different parts of the *sovkhoz* and rural and urban kin.

These networks, usually 'submerged' in the private sphere, were periodically crystallised much more visibly in ritual occasions, marked by feasting and gift exchange. The ostensibly social *gulyanki* were a visible sign and way of symbolically consolidating networks that were a basis for the exchange of gifts and favours. Similarly, reciprocal relationships between households were reinforced on the ritual and symbolic levels by the tradition of *chai-pitie* or tea-drinking, actually a substantial meal. At a wider level, households cemented their links with neighbours, colleagues and family through rituals such as the *sogym* feast, held to mark the slaughtering of livestock for the Winter. In late November or early December, kin and neighbours would get together to slaughter, skin and butcher a steer or a horse, afterwards eating *kuurdak*, a meal made with the fresh meat. In the week that followed, a series of other feasts would be held, and gifts of meat presented to other households, who would invite others in their turn. Therefore, as well as providing food for subsistence over the winter, *sogym* was an opportunity to literally nourish relationships of reciprocity. During my visits to Lenin, almost every week was punctuated by at least one big event and probably several smaller ones as well. All these occasions involved a huge investment of time and labour and considerable expense. As one of Kairat's sisters described their mother's funeral:

> 'The funeral was the biggest Lenin has ever seen - 700 people. I know because we had prepared 500 scarves with money in and we needed to make 200 more, it wasn't enough. Many people came out of respect for my father. The Akim came too - the first time he had come here for a funeral. So many people came that we couldn't hold the meal at home - the old people complained, but there was no space. We had to hire the *toikhana* and use Krasnonosov's house as well. We needed 14 sheep and 2 horses for the meal. Three sacks of *baursaqi*. Biscuits. Raisins. There was no drink, but the pieces of cloth worked out just as expensive in the end. She lay in for three days, and the house was full of relatives. My sister and I had to 'sleep' in the kitchen on chairs. The women came to lay out the body - we'd bought French perfume. It was expensive, but we thought we could use it for presents afterwards. Only one of the *babushki* went and put it in her pocket. Somebody saw her, but we didn't want to make a scene. A lot of men were involved in digging the grave and they all had to be fed. Afterwards, four *babushki* stayed here for 40 days, until the *pominki*. They were as capricious as children. They had no teeth, so I had to prepare special food. Then one relative had told me that according to tradition, I had to invite people again, every Friday until the *pominki*. It turned out that that was wrong

> - but her family came every week and took home a bucketful of *besbarmak* every time. Then there was the *pominki* and a year later a second one, for 400 people[216].'

What had changed from the Soviet period was the immediate significance of these social institutions to rural households. On the one hand, as demonstrated in the example of Kairat's private farm, at a time when relationships of trust had broken down and when 'neutral' market structures did not yet exist, social networks were playing a key role in the creation and operation of new enterprises. This particular funeral brought together the huge social network which Kairat's parents had assiduously built and he had drawn on powerful patrons within it to set up his private farm. However, in this example, other, less prosperous households within the network were stretching custom to bring food home from a feast to contribute directly to household consumption[217]. In addition, now that the safety net of state support was broken, social networks were the first line of defence in a crisis such as an illness in the family. In this instance, as the former state farm slipped further towards bankruptcy, two of Kairat's sisters drew directly on this network in order to leave the community and find work and housing in the *rayon* centre.

As this example shows, different households were situated within the same network in diverse ways and might use it for different purposes. However, the importance of being in a network can be gauged from the time, energy and resources devoted to these ritual occasions. A large proportion of the livestock raised in domestic smallholdings were slaughtered for special occasions, visits from relatives or given to other family members. Much of the pickles and other preserves produced by women were also destined for big feasts or entertaining guests at home, or as gifts, and valued purchased items, such as confectionary, were uniquely destined for such occasions. Similarly, one of the primary reasons given for engaging in trade was to be able to afford the gifts needed for weddings and funeral celebrations. Even the poorest households devoted considerable resources to the ritual and gift economy, despite the proportionately greater investment of their resources this required. One of the most important concerns for Kulande, the widowed single mother cited above was to put on a 'proper' funeral for her husband. My research echoed other findings that suggested that exclusion from social networks was correlated with increased likelihood of poverty and conversely, that those who could afford to exchange more gifts seemed to be faring better than others (Werner, 1997a and b; Kandiyoti: 1996).

In effect, the erosion of the *sovkhoz* public sphere and the turn to the domestic economy and social networks was producing new patterns of differentiation and inequality. In the state farm structure, access to paid employment was the major determinant of social stratification. Although it was still important, the key strategy was now to obtain labour in the social sector, where money wages were still being paid, rather than in the agricultural sector, where they were not. The growing importance of the domestic smallholding was also bringing other factors into play. Successful management of the domestic smallholding required various

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[216] Conversation with Karashash, Lenin, Fieldnotes October 1997.

[217] I found an interesting historical parallel to this situation in the novel 'Ochevidets' which I found in the *sovkhoz* school library. Referring to a period of hardship in the *aul,* one of the characters comments that: 'Golodno v aule. Esli k komu priedet gost', to soberetsya syuda ves' aul v nadezhde na ugoshchenie' (People in the *aul* are going hungry. If a guest arrives at someone's yurt, the whole *aul* gathers in the hope of being given food).

skills and resources that were not distributed equally across the community. In the struggle to obtain inputs, particularly feed for domestic stock, residence in the outlying villages provided greater access to grazing and hay land, thereby enabling households to maintain a larger herd and to possess more tradable and exchangeable resources. On the other hand, access to transport was a key factor in obtaining inputs and selling outputs. Households with their own transport were occasionally able to buy goods more cheaply and sell their own produce more dearly outside the community. Others had to rely on the traders, the *kommertsanty*, who came to the central village and bought, sold or bartered goods at a mark-up. Similarly, social networks provided crucial opportunities for extending the range of individual households in getting support and obtaining, selling or exchanging goods and services and this social capital was also unevenly distributed across the community. Households' strategies varied according to their access to these resources and their perceptions of the new environment.

Household strategies and local cultural patterns and identities

In Chapter 2 I also argued that, under socialism, people continued to order their social relations in particular ways, connected with indigenous cultural, ethnic and gender identities. State farms were composed of various groups, who stood in different relationships to the public and private spheres it embodied. On Lenin, the central village was relatively more identified with and incorporated in the *sovkhoz* public sphere than the *otdeleniye* and distant herders' encampments. It was in the central village that the bulk of the public administration, services and amenities were concentrated. Similarly, it was here that households identified with and relied most strongly on public labour for the *sovkhoz* as a source of income and personal status and value. On the other hand, the *otdeleniye* were perceived as more distant from the public sphere and correspondingly as more rooted in indigenous 'tradition'[218]. This distinction between the centre and periphery, Soviet and traditional culture, was also an ethnic one. The central village was predominantly Slav and German, with the Kazak population concentrated in the periphery. Although both Kazak and Slav respondents identified strongly with 'their' *sovkhoz*, and with their own identity as '*mestnye lyudi*' (locals), this shared identity concealed rather different imaginings of what the community represented. Slav respondents, in particular, tended to identify with the Soviet concept of building a new and modern productive and cultural infrastructure in the wilderness[219]. On the other hand, Kazak respondents identified with an image of the *sovkhoz* as an extended

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[218] This contrast was evident in the way people talked about the different parts of the community. It was common for people to refer specifically to the central village as 'the *sovkhoz*', for example, when talking about going into the centre from one of the outlying villages. My respondents also told me that, during the Soviet period, it was seen as a 'step up' in status to move from the otdeleniye to the centre.

[219] It is interesting that the Russians I met on the neighbouring former *sovkhoz*, Plodorovsky, did not identify in the same way with the Soviet development project. This community had originally been set up as a labour camp for kulaks and other repressed people under Stalin, some of whom had opted to stay on when the camp was closed. Here people identified much more strongly with their own family's tradition of hard work and survival, rather than with the Soviet state. There were many more private farmers here, and several of them explicitly referred to their pride in their kulak ancestors and their example as models for their own decision to go it alone.

family, within which all the smaller kin groupings and other collectives took their place[220]. At risk of simplifying, Slav respondents identified the community with the public sphere, which the Soviet state had helped to build, whilst Kazak respondents extended existing ideas of kinship and relatedness to incorporate the new *sovkhoz* public sphere. The balance between indigenous and Soviet culture had also shifted across generations, with the younger generation of Kazaks more identified with the latter. How were these factors influencing the strategies of different households?

As one respondent described, when it came to household strategies on the domestic economy, 'people do different things – some turn to trade, some to their private plot, it all depends what you feel at home with'. These choices were often explicitly linked to ethnicity: the Russians were used to keeping a private plot, the Kazaks to relying on livestock and Uzbeks, for example, engaged in trade. Each ethnicity had its own 'niche'. On Lenin, these ethnic differences were at once significant and increasingly blurred, as survival necessitated the adoption of unfamiliar practices. For example, in the central village, although Slav respondents generally referred to their private plots as *the* basis for subsistence and Kazak respondents to the need to keep livestock, in actual fact, households of both ethnicities were pursuing both strategies. Similarly, whereas previously there had been more 'ethnic specialisation' in livestock, some of my Kazak respondents had begun to keep pigs, since pork was now considerably more profitable than beef[221]. The preferred option was for the Kazak household to keep their pigs with those of their Slav neighbours rather than in their own *sarai*, thereby blurring but not totally overstepping ethnic – and religious – boundaries. In fact, the most salient distinction made by my respondents in the central village was between themselves and the *otdeleniye*. The *otdeleniye* were much more 'Kazak' and much more 'traditional', I was told. Here, households continued to keep more stock, in the old way. They had access to more and better grazing land. They relied on meat and dairy products and did not bother with cultivating vegetables. On my visits to the outlying villages, I found that this was largely the case and that respondents here largely identified themselves with this distinction. Access to resources and cultural identities were therefore combining to shape different household strategies.

The same was true of households' strategies on social networks. Although the vitality and inclusiveness of the ritual economy was one of the most striking things about *sovkhoz* Lenin, Kazaks and non-Kazaks were incorporated in different ways. Not everyone in the community shared the view that the increasing emphasis on feasting and gift exchange was the best focus for household strategies. One Slav woman respondent described how the issue had become a bone of contention between herself and her Kazak husband. Whilst he felt that the household's resources would be best employed by holding a big wedding feast for their son, thereby nourishing the web of kin and community solidarities, she felt that they would do better to focus on the needs of the immediate family circle by giving him money to get set up in life by renting and equipping a flat. She framed this difference of opinion in ethnic

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[220] As I have already described, Soviet hierarchies had been incorporated into Kazak feasts, such as pominki, so that extra sittings were organised for work colleagues as well as close and extended kin. These feasts therefore included 'the whole *sovkhoz*' as a 'family' including Russians as well as Kazaks.
[221] In September 1997, pork was selling for 120 tenge per kilo and beef for 85 at the Karaganda bazaar.

terms, saying that she did not understand why 'at a time like this, people here, Kazaks, spend so much on weddings and are trying to outdo each other'. I found that Kazak households tending to invest much more heavily in this social institution than non-Kazaks or more 'Russified' Kazaks. The majority of the Kazak population on Lenin had extensive kin networks on which they could now draw. My Kazak informants carried extremely detailed kinship maps in their heads into which they could place virtually every Kazak member of the *sovkhoz*, from close family to distant third cousins, and a great part of the other local state farms and towns as well. These maps traced long-term relationships, which reached back to past ancestors and forward to the youngest generations. Kin obligations and solidarities were therefore conceived as an ongoing continuum and, in the current circumstances, as the most solid form of relationship. Any household strategy, from getting hay to leaving the community, was generally discussed in terms of which kin, where, might be able to provide support.

In contrast, the Slav population on Lenin generally lacked extended kinship networks of this kind. Most families had originally come to Kazakstan either as deportees or as volunteers, leaving the bulk of their extended family behind elsewhere. They had also tended to have fewer children. Not only this, but the younger generations had often left Kazakstan to study and work elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Before the collapse of the USSR, this family mobility and fragmentation had been offset by the subsidised transport links which meant that family members could keep in regular contact. However, this was no longer the case. Unlike my Kazak respondents, who were confident of obtaining support from kin, the refrain often repeated by my Slav respondents was '*komu my nuzhnyi*?' – or 'who needs us now?'. If Slav households on Lenin could not rely on kinship support to the same extent as their Kazak neighbours, they had developed other, non-kin-based support networks during the Soviet period, although these were often perceived to be less stable. Two forms of network, based on work collectives and neighbourhood relations, have already been discussed. Although these were shared by both Kazaks and non-Kazaks, they were much more central to the latter, as I observed when I stayed with Lena, another of Kairat's sisters and her Russian husband, Victor, on the opposite side of the central village. In their street, mainly built by Slav *Tselina* volunteers, neighbourhood relations were particularly close. As Victor put it, '(our neighbours) are closer than many of my actual relatives – we can rely on each other for any kind of help and we are totally at home in each other's houses.' It was with a neighbour that Victor had decided to set up a private farm, rather than with members of his own family. Slav households also maintained 'functional friendships' (Piraiinen, 1996) with 'useful' people both on and off the *sovkhoz*[222]. Therefore, whereas most of my Kazak respondents were devoting more time and energy to broad kinship networks of reciprocity, my Russian respondents were focusing primarily on close family and on negotiating non-kin *blat* relations to maintain their domestic economy.

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[222] Examples of the *blat* networks used by non-Kazaks on Lenin included the 'friendships' with militia officers in the nearby town, who could provide access to petrol and other goods 'on the side'. In particular, they controlled what was locally termed the 'winter garden' where passing Uzbek lorries would be 'persuaded' to unload a proportion of their load as a 'fine'. If one knew the right militia officer, the winter garden was a good source of free fruit and other goods.

As for strategies on the domestic smallholding, boundaries could be blurred. Although Kazaks and Slavs tended to have different types of social network, these were often used in symbiosis. One characteristic example of the interaction between kinship, *blat* and neighbourhood networks was an incident where a Slav man ran over a Kazak neighbour's goose and was beaten up by the owner. The neighbours gathered to try to resolve the incident. Whilst the Kazak neighbours focused on using their 'kinship' maps to place the owner of the goose and the police officers who had arrived at the scene, the Slav neighbours drew on their own networks (in this case, a useful friend in the local hospital who could be persuaded to falsify the result of the breathalyser test) so that the neighbourhood could reach an amicable conclusion which did not involve the 'outside' authorities. Another particularly striking feature of Lenin was that the feasting and gift exchange that accompanied it often incorporated the community as a whole, particularly for weddings, funerals and remembrance celebrations. Therefore, although the state farm office no longer provided a spatial, public focal point for the community, there was another kind of focal point, hidden in the private sphere[223]. Or, looking at it in a slightly different way, we could say that the ritual economy had become the 'public' face of households and the community as a whole.

On the other hand, there were limits to this symbiosis and inclusion. At the individual and household level, the example of Kairat's extended family highlights some of the boundaries. Taken together, the various households had access to a broad spectrum of resources (including the Kazak households' kin-based and Victor and Lena's neighbourhood-based social networks, the private farm, waged employment and domestic smallholdings) which could be used in concert to boost their opportunities and well-being. However, as we have seen, the private farm was disrupting the strategy of maintaining reciprocal kin-based networks of support. In addition, in 'marrying out', Lena had been effectively marginalised from the wider family. In response, she was moving increasingly away from maintaining kin-based networks towards neighbourhood solidarities and market-based transactions with non-kin. She was also much less willing to contribute her own household's resources (notably access to transport) to the other households. In this sense, there was a tendency towards polarisation rather than inclusion.

Likewise, although the ritual economy was now in many ways the 'public face' of the community, traditional support networks were not compensating for the demise of the *sovkhoz* public sphere by serving as a springboard for new, inclusive, conceptions of community[224]. One sign of this was that, with independence and the resurgence of Kazak

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[223] Humphrey (1998 : 483-487) describes the renaissance of an alternative 'spiritual' or 'religious' space, on one of the former kolkhozy she studied in Buryatiya. Here a specific site has been created for gatherings of 200-300 people for the Emege-Ezhiin sacrifices and rituals, reviving shamanist spiritual links with the earth. On Lenin, no alternative ritual space of this kind has been created. Pominki and other large gatherings are held in the home, usually in one or several yurts, or in one of the remaining Soviet social spaces, the *toikhana*, although this was now often described as an infringement of 'proper' Kazak tradition, and seen very much as a last resort.

[224] This is not the case in all rural communities. In other cases, the ritual economy has served as an embryonic basis for activity in 'civil society'. For example, through the Hivos organisation in Almaty, I met two women from a *sovkhoz* in Semipalatinsk *oblast*, who had founded an NGO. The initial catalyst had been a big clan celebration. Over the Winter, village women had got together to prepare for this, making felts and other decorations. Afterwards, they had decided to extend their cooperation

national identity, the ritual economy was being framed as more exclusively Kazak. So long as the *sovkhoz* existed, its structures had been integrated into the Kazak ritual economy. Non-Kazak as well as Kazak *sovkhoz* members had participated in *pominki* and other feasts as members of particular work teams and collectives. Now, Slavs reported that they felt increasingly uncomfortable, since they were being pressured to perform muslim rituals on these occasions. Slav women married to Kazak men also reported that they were coming under pressure from their husband's families to convert to Islam and that their children felt that they were having to choose between a Kazak and a Russian identity. In a mirror image of the stratification of the *sovkhoz* public sphere, the ritual economy was therefore marked by tensions around belonging and exclusion. Another sign was that the informal, village-wide tradition of organisation for traditional ceremonial events, rooted in the kinship and clan relations, was not being extended to compensate for all the public functions formerly provided by the *sovkhoz* administration, women's council and trade union. One such example was the failure to organise a meal for 'Old People's Day' on 1 October, formerly managed by the state farm. Although people appreciated this occasion and had a lot of experience in organising big feasts for weddings that could be transposed to this smaller-scale event, they objected that it was not their responsibility to organise it. Everybody was now trying to survive 'on their own' (*sam po sebe*) and could not possibly find any extra resources for a celebration of this kind[225]. Therefore, people did not perceive the withdrawal of the state as liberating them to participate in a new democratic civil society by creating horizontal links, but as the disappearance of the prerequisites for any collective action beyond the confines of 'traditional' support networks. It was no longer a question of actively cooperating to build a community, as it had been in the past, but of shoring up what remained of it as a bulwark against further erosions in quality of life. From this perspective, the model of 'civil society' envisaged in the macro-level development model had little sense at local level. Rather than being integrated into a new market/democratic sphere, the community as a whole was being repositioned in a new 'subsistence' domain.

Another point of contrast within the community, was whether the 'defensive traditionalism' of relying on the domestic economy and kin and other solidarities was seen as a viable long-term alternative or as a temporary or stop-gap measure. In 1998, there was an evident sense of dislocation, loss and despondency at the 'death' of the *sovkhoz* in the central village and amongst the Russian and 'Russified' Kazak population there, many of whom were planning to leave. Here, the collapse of the public sphere was perceived to leave a vacuum, which could not be filled by reliance on the domestic economy. Paradoxically, in the most isolated third *otdeleniye*, where it might be thought that life would be still harsher, people were staying put. In 1998, respondents here were more sanguine about the disappearance of waged employment and public services. So long as they had enough livestock, they saw no reason to leave. Electricity had always been erratic. Employment had always been limited and they

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to helping the wider community and had decided to form an association. Fieldnotes and tape, 17.12.96.

[225] For example : 'It's true that women have a lot of experience in organising. But maybe it's the Kazak way – everybody gathers together for occasions like weddings and pominki. But otherwise people just aren't used to organising anything on their own initiative. Before, we were always told what to do, and we did it. There's so much that could be done. Take all the rubbish in the streets, it just needs someone to organise people to get together and collect it. But nobody wants to take responsibility on themselves.' Lyuba, Fieldnotes, 11.10.97

had always relied more heavily on their domestic smallholding. Moreover, they were nearly all members of the same *uru* and would stick together and survive, as they always had[226].

It appeared that those formerly most marginalised from the *sovkhoz* public sphere were now those most likely to remain. On the one hand, their position on the periphery of the *sovkhoz* and its public scheme of values had been offset by the centring of their locus of security and identity on the household and informal community, which were less affected than waged employment by the collapse of the public sphere. On the other hand, the most marginalised groups had developed informal networks and labour strategies which, at least initially, made them more adaptable. On the Lenin *otdeleniye*, the greater availability of land and fodder made it possible to maintain a large subsidiary farm. Likewise, the existing kin-based, inter-household and inter-generational divisions of labour could be extended to 'colonise' new spaces. The most common pattern was for individual households to diversify their contributions to a joint strategy according to age, with the older and middle cohorts remaining to manage the smallholding, whilst the youngest cohort found paid employment in the local towns. Rural and urban households were therefore dependent on each other for different types of resources.

Looking beyond Lenin, this framework also applied to the other state farm communities. On Sarybulak and Druzhba, although many people regretted the loss of health and welfare services, the collapse of the *sovkhoz* was not perceived in such dramatic terms as on Lenin. On Sarybulak, as on the Lenin *otdeleniye*, it was perceived that the demise of the *sovkhoz* could be compensated by households and systems of kin support and reciprocity. Subsistence farming was seen by many as a viable pursuit in itself and by others as a possible springboard for market activity. On Druzhba, the state farm had been just one of the employment options available in the community, and many households had developed forms of secondary economy activity in opposition to the state. Here, the breakdown of the state farming and industry could be more easily compensated by new commercial possibilities in private farming, trading and waged employment in the private enterprises springing up around Almaty. On the other hand, as I argued in the last chapter, the gap between those who had access to these opportunities and those who were being forced into subsistence activity was growing.

Conclusion

According to the 'transition' model, reform would lead to the emergence of a new non-state sector of market and civil society, which would take on many of the functions of the state, thereby leading to a more efficient division of responsibilities and an experience of increased choice, opportunity and democratic accountability for communities. However, although systemic transformation was changing loci of value and meaning, this was not in the ways envisaged at macro level. Privatisation and market reform were leading, to varying extents in different localities, to the emergence of private enterprises and the commercialisation of local economies. However, although private enterprises and services were emerging, they were embedded in complex ways in the domestic sphere and could not be seen in isolation

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[226] Unlike the rest of the community, this village was dominated by the Altyntory uru.

from wider subsistence and support strategies. In fact, for local households and communities, the most evident sign of rural privatisation was the erosion of the public functions formerly assumed by the *sovkhoz* and the ensuing incapability of the state to take care of its rural citizens. In this context, in order to maintain their well-being, most rural households were turning to a survival strategy of 'defensive traditionalism' (Piraiinen, 1996). In other words, they were withdrawing as far as possible from the market economy and sphere of monetary exchange, whilst seeking to increase their self-sufficiency through subsistence production and reliance on kinship networks, patron-client relations or community ties. Far from promoting 'modernisation', rural privatization therefore seemed in many respects to be strengthening patterns of social and economic behaviour which existed prior to the planned or market economy. However, we cannot see this shift in terms of a simple 'return' to the past. The picture in my research communities was a peculiar combination of increased traditionalism, on the one hand and increased dependency on the market, on the other. Just as 'traditional' behaviours adapted to and intertwined with socialist structures and practices, they were now adapting to the introduction of the market. These entwined processes were producing new vectors of inclusion/exclusion and inequality, relating to access to resources across the different spheres, the money economy, access to work and access to kinship and social networks. Although the *nomenklatura*, those 'included' in Soviet times, had often managed to convert their resources into assets in the new circumstances, the most marginalised groups had also developed niches and strategies which helped them to react creatively and adaptively. The next chapter looks more specifically at the gender dimension of these processes.

CHAPTER 7

Restructuring and the Rural Gender Contract

'We must expect that there will be tensions between (...) stable elements and the incentives to change – tensions that have to be dealt with in negotiations both between men and women and within persons. We may also expect that there may be cleavages between the ways in which men and women describe the world. Such cleavages partly reflect different experience, and may take the form of clearly different (conflicting) interests. Such cleavages may remain relatively untouched by changes in the circumstances of the economy and education, or they may mirror such changes.'
(Rudie, 1994: 156-7)

The previous chapter analysed how political and economic reform was changing the environment in which households were situated and how households were adapting their strategies to meet these changes. I argued that reform was leading not only to the emergence of a new market sector of private enterprises and services, but also, more visibly, to the collapse of the state enterprises and services and increased reliance on strategies such as self-provisioning and social-networking.

Just as development policy was changing the parameters in which households operated, it was also changing the thematic repertoire available to the individual men and women within them. As discussed in Chapter 2, under socialism, household strategies could be described as a form of heterophony, where 'a melody divides into several dissonant voices, each with its own variation of the theme, which is improvised by the individual singers until the end, when the song reverts to a single theme' (Figes, 2003: 181). Here, the theme or melody was the rural gender contract, the conceptual scheme which defined the activities of household members as complementary contributions to household status and well-being. The variation was expressed in the different ways individual members combined work for the state farm and work in the domestic economy. In the sometimes uneasy accommodation between pre-socialist and socialist models of gender domains, men's and women's 'proper' roles, resources and sense of identity were located in different places. Although women and men both continued to be associated with the public and domestic spheres and had specific tasks in each, men's primary role came to be defined as their 'outside'/productive work for the state farm and its financial contribution to the household and women's as their 'inside'/reproductive work for the domestic economy and its moral or spiritual contribution to the family and the ethnos. On the other hand, spaces in the local and socialist models left room for other resources and identities: education and work for the *sovkhoz* gave women their own independent material and social resources; conversely, on the margins of the socialist model, in 'Kazak' state farms and outlying villages, as well as in the niches provided by the second economy, both sexes identified more strongly or drew more resources from the private domain.

This chapter looks more specifically at the gender dimension of the reconfiguration of public and domestic domains. It explores two questions: first, how was gender intertwined with the new vectors of inclusion/exclusion and inequality and second, how far were changes in the economy and household strategies disrupting gender relations or how far were gender

domains resistant to or shaping change at local level? The analysis draws on the ethnographic examples already presented in Chapters 5 and 6 together with additional material from conversations, interviews and individual life histories. Given their centrality both in macro-level and local discourse, it focuses particularly on the changing forms and meanings of work and social networks.

I. Changing forms and meanings of work, value and social networks

At the macro level, work and the relationship between the individual, family and wider society were key elements in the socialist development model and were equally important in the new development ideology. In socialist ideology, the locus of value and status was work for the state and for the collective; in the new ideology, labour maintained its centrality, but the scale of value was inversed as private enterprise replaced state enterprise and emphasis shifted to the need to liberate individual initiative to restore society, economy and polity. The feminist critiques of transition discussed in Chapter 1 made a direct connection between the gendered subtext of the new ideology and women's position on the labour market and in the family. They highlighted that, as the state receded, both sexes were to be 'set free' from the repressions it had imposed, but whilst men were to be liberated to fulfil their 'natural' role as hero-provider-entrepreneurs in the new market sphere, women were to be liberated from the 'unnatural' gendered division of labour the state had enforced to 'return' to their 'natural' and 'proper' place in the home. In Chapter 3, I argued that a gendered reading of state discourse on nation-building and economic development in Kazakstan illustrated that, here too, a division was being created between market and domestic domains, constructing men as breadwinners and women as homemakers. In Chapter 1, I explored existing analyses of the interaction between this paradigm and gender relations at micro-level, which pointed in two directions. One argument was that avenues of opportunity in the new market domain were being closed to women, whilst their burden of caring and reproductive work was increasing and made 'invisible' (Verdery, 1994). Consequently, women were being forcibly relocated to the home and, within households, risked losing their financial independence, access to resources and relative bargaining power (Fong, 1993; Funk and Mueller, 1993; Bridger et al, 1996). Another argument was that the alternative or informal niches and resources – including social networks – which women had developed under socialism were putting them in a good position to seize new opportunities (Bruno, 1996b; Bauer et al, 1997). It was also argued that the meaning of state, market and domestic domains could not be inferred and that the values ascribed to them in local contexts might be important in shaping women's and men's strategies and relative positions (Pine, 1994, 1995).

At local level, in everyday conversations and more formal interviews people often structured their experiences around a division between 'then/before' (*ran'she*) and 'now' (*seichas*). This dividing line was as much a moral as it was a temporal one. If 'before' was a system 'complete with its frameworks, rules and shared practices which found a legitimacy in people's everyday lives and in their production of values and culture' (Bruno, 1996: 60), 'after' was a shifting economic, social and cultural landscape where all that was solid appeared to have melted into air. As reform progressed, basic and important areas of daily life were ceasing to fit the moulds which people had come to expect under the socialist system. Again, two of the subjects which recurred most frequently were the changes in work

and social relationships, their impact on individuals' sense of identity and status and the inequalities they were introducing in communities, households and families. In Chapter 5, I argued that ideas about and arguments around labour and solidarity were an important metaphor for talking about entitlement and in structuring working relationships in the new private farms. In Chapter 6 I discussed the changes in work and family. Waged labour had become a scarce resource to be pursued in competition with others rather than a right and secure possibility. Some branches of labour had disappeared altogether or were being eroded, whilst other new or formerly despised branches were expanding. Work-based support networks were also changing along with employment structures, some surviving in altered forms, others losing their cohesion and usefulness. Whilst the family was coming to assume a greater role in subsistence production and the provision of care, kin and other solidarities were simultaneously undermined by the increasing differentiation brought by the market economy. These shifting forms and meanings of labour and social networks were also changing feelings about what 'the good life' was, how far it was available and how to achieve it. What was seen as desirable or possible for some groups was perceived or experienced as inappropriate or impossible for others. Looking at current changes in conjunction with the values ascribed locally to the state, market and domestic domains, previous cultural constructions of gender domains, and the situation of the rural economy as a whole, the analysis in this chapter teases out the complexities and ambiguities of this shifting situation.

II. Gender and local constructions of the marketplace

From the perspective of the macro-level development model, the new market domain was a neutral or impersonal space, where money transactions were enacted between individuals acting essentially on the basis of economic calculation. However, the material discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 has demonstrated that this was at best a partial picture. To the frustration of Western donors, many rural communities opted to 'stay together' in collectives rather than take up entrepreneurial opportunities; and even independent farmers saw their enterprises in terms of survival and kin solidarities as well as efficiency and commercial returns. Whilst Western project managers decried the illogic of keeping a cow, when the cost of feed, time and labour would make it cheaper to buy milk and invest elsewhere, most villagers saw keeping livestock as an eminently rational strategy. In seeking to make sense and use of the new circumstances, people were therefore drawing on existing knowledge, relationships, identities and strategies in ways that influenced the way the market was constructed.

At local level, the market was an unfamiliar domain but not a neutral one. Under socialism, work outside state employment was morally suspect, either seen as not 'real' labour or associated with bourgeois exploitation and individual enrichment. On Druzhba, it was the most marginal groups, such as the Turks and Koreans, who systematically engaged in alternative work such as market trade. On Lenin, not engaging in trade was equated with the moral values of Soviet civilisation and indigenous values of solidarity, and as something which set the community apart from the 'undeveloped' South of Kazakstan. Although accepted to different extents, these values were prevalent in all three communities and did not simply disappear in the new environment. Similarly, although there were many new and unknown players, including foreign firms and donor organisations, those involved in market activity, from 'big' actors such as farm directors, to 'small' actors such as stallholders on local

markets, were often known to each other and had been involved in long-standing working and social relationships. This embeddedness of the market in existing relations and value systems was inter-reacting with the new macro and micro-level environment to shape market behaviour. From this perspective, cultural constructions of gender domains and identities were also interacting with the new parameters to shape the forms and boundaries of individuals' activities and of the market itself.

One way of reading the ethnographic material would be to say that that state and local discourse and practice were combining to create a gendered division between market and subsistence domains. We saw that the local ideas about men's 'outside/provider' roles and women's 'inside/nourishing' roles shaped under socialism were being transposed to the new economic structures. In the folk 'inside/outside' metaphor, the state farm had been familiarised as a bounded space where people knew each other or were related. Now, some forms of work, such as market trading, were bringing individuals further into 'outside' or unbounded space. Within new family farms, such as Kairat's, men took responsibility for 'outside' trade with 'unknown' actors, whilst women were responsible for 'inside' or informal trade via 'known' actors, including friends, colleagues and kin. The market could also be seen as another opportunity for men to consolidate their position as 'providers' or main 'breadwinners'. On Druzhba, women and men were increasingly coming to occupy different niches in the market economy, with men moving into off-farm waged work, particularly local processing industries, often joint ventures with foreign companies, and women remaining in farming, juggling subsistence and trade in surplus produce. Similarly, on Lenin, those men who were able to find work elsewhere were migrating out of the village, either individually or with their immediate family, leaving either their wives or the older generation to maintain the domestic smallholding.

However, the preceding discussion of these ethnographic examples has cautioned against making a straightforward equation between men/market and women/subsistence. The examples highlighted three other factors: first that the flexibility within the rural gender contract during the Soviet period was being carried forward into the new environment, second, that both the macro level and micro level discourses tended to obscure women's actual contribution to economic activity and households' economic well-being and third, that reform was also destabilising men's as well as women's relationship to the public domain.

Just as native metaphors had stretched to accommodate women's labour in the state farm sector, the idioms of the rural gender contract now allowed areas of market activity to be defined by both sexes as part of women's family-based economic, caring and nourishing responsibilities. We saw how women respondents who worked as private farmers, traders or entrepreneurs used metaphors such as 'feeding the family' to make their activity both morally acceptable and congruent with ideas about women's 'proper' conduct and 'inside' space. At the same time, just as women had expressed other meanings and feelings about work in socialist enterprises, many now expressed different feelings about trading or working for private farms and firms. Although, in the presence of husbands and kin, women tended to use the 'feeding the family' idiom, amongst themselves, they told stories of 'initiation' and the acquisition of experience that highlighted dangerous but exciting encounters with freedom and the unexpected and their own daring, strength and skill. Other women also wove a

narrative of admiration around women traders, stressing their skills, courage and boldness. In this sense, like the socialist work collective, the market also gave some women an alternative 'private' space where they could escape family obligations and explore other identities[227].

Second, women's management of household farming and social networks were a useful resource in the new market environment. In Chapter 6, we saw how women were able to convert surplus food from the household farm into tradable and exchangeable goods and also how they used their existing social and kin networks to conduct trade and organise labour and marketing for the new private enterprises. In this way, women were able to 'humanise' or 'personalise' the market, and the trust and reliable personal connections they maintained were an integral part of successful farming and trading[228].

Women's position in the fluid field of the domestic economy and social networks therefore gave them a strong base for participation in the market, both in terms of morally validating their activity and equipping them with important resources. In turn, through activities such as trade, women brought back gains to the household in the form of network connections and money, which put them in a strong negotiating position as resource persons in their own right. For some, notably the long-distance shuttle traders (*chelnoki*), who travelled abroad to Pakistan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, there was a perception that the personal style and security they gained in the market place could be brought into other social situations, giving them increased confidence and strength. As one shuttle trader's daughter described: 'Being a shuttle trader is not something you are, but something you become. They are people you wouldn't want to mess with. They have more self-confidence and power than most women. They are even forming an interest group. Recently a group of women traders held a demonstration (never reported) to protest about how a colleague was treated by the police' (Fieldnotes, Almaty, May 1997). Some of the women who operated in the new private sector of the economy were therefore able to expand and consolidate their position. Using the flexibility of local idioms around gender domains, they were able to define the new 'outside' space in ways that enabled them to use their resources and initiative to shape new identities and activities.

The situation can usefully be compared to that described by Ingrid Rudie (1994) in rural Malaysia, where, as in Kazakstan, indigenous systems contained both 'impulses towards male hegemony and strong impulses towards a more even juxtaposition of women with men'. Here too, women traditionally had a part to play in the public sphere of the village and had ritual and networking functions of major importance to the viability of household and community. Although the new discourses around 'modern' development tended to reinforce the tendency towards male hegemony, women's ability to elicit resources from ceremonial and market trading enabled them to maintain a position as resource persons within households. However, Rudie's analysis also highlighted that women's assets were dependent

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[227] See also the chapters by Astuti, on Madagascar, Pine, on Poland and Stewart, on Roma and the general discussion in the Introduction to *Lilies of the Field: Marginal People Who Live for the Moment* S. Day, E. Papataxiarchis and M. Stewart (eds.) for a useful parallel.

[228] See also Bruno (1996b), Kaneff, (1999) and Rudie (1994) for an exploration of comparable skills and processes in urban Russia, rural Bulgaria and rural Malaysia, respectively.

on a particular division of work and a particular kind of female solidarity, that were not easily carried over as local subsystems were more firmly integrated into large-scale economic and political systems. She found that, whilst women's identity as resource persons was tenacious, it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, as community networks were eroded and as the 'housewife' role overtook women's role as economic contributor. From this perspective, the ethnographic material also situated the limits or boundaries of women's market resources and involvement[229].

First, although women's informal social networks were a key resource in both their market and survival strategies, their stability was coming into question as a result of economic differentiation. This process had gone furthest on Druzhba. As in rural Uzbekistan (Kandiyoti, 1998), under socialism, many women had been involved in gender-specific informal networks. On the one hand, there were the work-collective-based women's credit groups (*chernaya kassa*), where each member contributed part of their salary and took it in turns to draw the lump sum. On the other, this work-based credit system was intertwined with a system of regular but informal get-togethers, where women took it in turns to invite colleagues, kin and neighbours to their homes. Each member would contribute an agreed amount. The hostess would use the money collected to provide refreshments, and keep the remaining lump sum, which she usually put towards the next feast[230]. In Kandiyoti's case study, the functions of these forms of credit had changed, as the money was increasingly needed to provide cash resources for households. However, the system of communal sharing and support itself had not (yet) been undermined by inequalities introduced by the encroachment of the market economy. A conscious effort was being made not to exclude less well-off neighbours or kin by letting them share the food and the recreation even if they were not able to pay.

On Druzhba, although similar efforts were being made towards inclusion, the strains and tensions were far more evident. Here the *chernaya kassa* system appeared to have disappeared altogether along with the former socialist work collectives and divisions between women with land or employment and those without were putting solidarity relations in jeopardy. In 1997, women formerly linked through these networks continued to gather in each other's homes, but the introduction of private farming was changing their relationships. Women farmers, such as Bota, drew on their networks of former colleagues and neighbours to do fieldwork, particularly at harvest time. Both sides described the relationship as one of 'help' and 'friendship' and linked this with socialist and indigenous values of mutual support and reciprocity. In 1998, relations were tense and described differently by the two sides. Bota now said that the other women were 'working for' her and complained that they did not work well or efficiently; the other women maintained that they were 'helping' out of friendship. The two parties now had a different investment in the relationship, which was becoming increasingly assymetric. The landless women were reliant on the connections of

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[229] Another comparison here would be with Cole's *Women of the Praia* which looks at changes in women's labour in Portugal with the end of Fascism and beginning of socialist development.
[230] On Lenin, it appeared that no direct money transactions were involved. Each hostess would lay on a feast at her own expense and using her own domestic resources (baking *baursaki* etc.). The rule was that enough should be provided so that the members could share the food, but also take food home to their households and the hostess received recognition for her generosity.

solidarity for subsistence and were resistant to moving to the language of employer/employee, which signalled a change in relations and highlighted inequality. Working for somebody from the community as an employee was widely perceived to be shameful or immoral[231]. Only unemployed men from the city and in-migrants from the Kazak diaspora, derogatorily labelled as *kalpaki* and seen as the lowest and most culturally backward sector of the population, explicitly worked as hired labour. Conversely, the landowner needed to ensure that her land gave the best possible returns and now highlighted the contractual aspects of the relationship. However, small farmers such as Bota, who did not have sufficient resources to employ outside labour, were still reliant on their social networks. On the other hand, those who were better off could afford to use the new possibilities of market and money transactions to hire workers. For them, the 'language of help' was becoming a moral rather than an economic one. In a moral atmosphere where community and solidarity were important values, entrepreneurs ran the risk of reprisals, ranging from being labelled as profiteers, being socially cold-shouldered or asked to pay higher prices to finding that their fields had been set alight. As Dina's example illustrated, women entrepreneurs, in particular, risked crossing a specific gendered boundary out of the moral economy. Women's existing social networks were therefore being maintained but destabilised by the nascent economic inequalities.

It was difficult to speculate how the situation would evolve. One possibility was that there would be increasing differentiation between types of network, as successful women traders and farmers formed alternative but more exclusive networks of their own, excluding the less wealthy. On Druzhba, wealthy farmers such as Dina were beginning to unite in associations, which gave access to other forms of labour-sharing and credit. On the other hand, the complex relationships between Dina and the people working for her illustrated that patterns of differentiation were difficult to predict. Although male workers from the city were hired on a contractual basis and paid set wages, the relationship with migrant labourers was structured by a complex hybrid of market relations and ideas about moral community. An entire family would be lodged in one of her outbuildings in return for their labour. The men often ate in the kitchen with Dina and her family whilst the women, who she referred to as *moi zhenshchiny* (my women) would spend time in 'inner' space in the home, discussing children and intimate emotional matters. At the same time, these families lived in poor and unsanitary conditions, were expected to be available for work whenever needed, were berated for their 'laziness' and, in some cases, summarily dismissed. The relationship therefore bore hallmarks of inclusiveness and inequality, reciprocity and exploitation. Beyond the in-migrant labourers, longstanding members of the community were also involved in a variety of share-cropping and other arrangements. It was striking how these

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[231] In this context people used a particular term for working, '*batrachit*', which comes from the word '*batrak*' – a particular category of peasants constituted during the post-revolution and early civil war years. As Werth (1984 : 71-77) describes, these were peasants on the margins of the rural community, who had often lost everything during the Revolution or civil war, did not have sufficient means to farm their land and were obliged to become agricultural wage workers. After the dissolution of the big estates, this generally meant working for rich peasants, often erratic work by day or week under poor conditions. The *batrak* 'was extremely isolated in a rural society which tended to consider him (or her) as a vagabond, or at best as an inveterate layabout.' As well as using this term, people also claimed that only 'alkashi' (inveterate alcoholics) and BICHi (byvshii intelligentyi chelovek – lit. 'formerly cultured/educated people', ie. people who have dropped out) worked as hired labour.

working and social relationships on Druzhba, the most 'market-oriented' and 'privatised' former *sovkhoz* could be paralleled with the forms of patron/dependent labour emerging on Sarybulak. An alternative trajectory would therefore be for particular networks of solidarity to be maintained, whilst becoming more assymetric.

Another possibility was that the different life experiences of the various cohorts of women would become increasingly important. Women in the middle cohort, such as Dina and Bota, were able to draw on the social capital they had developed during the socialist period, when the combination of work for the state and social networks gave them important resources. In the case of these women, their position in the life cycle, as mother and *khozyaika* in their own right, had combined with their previous positions in state employment to give them the proper age, experience and resources to launch into market activity. With the disappearance of state employment and the breakdown of trust and strains on neighbourhood and other networks, it was not at all certain that younger generations of women would be able to create and maintain the same kind of social capital. This also points to the possible disruption of local expectations about age, life cycle and activity brought about by market reform.

Second, we saw that women's freedom of action and initiative did not necessarily translate into formal entitlement or power. In the example of private family farms, women's contribution was not always reflected in the new property regime, which was becoming increasingly important in determining the future trajectory of the new enterprises and the position of their members in the formal economy. Similarly, women's dominance in trade can be seen both as a result of their resources and as a result of their lack of resources. Although some forms of trade potentially provided a path towards economic prosperity, from the perspective of the wider formal economy, even shuttle-trade was an economically marginal activity or niche. Locally too, trade in particular was often perceived as 'shameful' or as a last resort for the economically marginal, rather than part of the concretisation of new opportunities.

Third, the material raises the complex issue of the relationship between discourse and practice. The use of the 'family' idiom to define women's involvement in market activity can interpreted as both a resource and a constraint. The metaphor operated in a number of different ways. On the one hand, it enabled the market (like the *sovkhoz*) to be classified as 'safe' or 'family' space where women could operate without transgressing gender boundaries and enabled women to maintain a 'flexible' identity that gave them entry into particular niches. On the other hand, it signalled that it was less acceptable for women to engage in entrepreneurial activity and maintained the status quo by defining their work in ways that did not challenge men's breadwinner/provider role. Within households, the idiom of women/family and men/market was therefore both assymetrical, in that it confirmed men's authority, and complementary, in that it preserved the rural gender contract, whilst enabling household members to reach into, shape and use all the new niches available to them. The question of how local definitions of men's and women's activities would affect their future development is one that requires further investigation. The material suggested that, in terms of access to the market, local discourses around men's activities coincided better with the categories and values prevalent at macro level. For example, although the boundary between 'private' and 'subsistence' farms was actually blurred, local discourses that defined male-

headed farms and men's farming activities as 'commercial' and women's as 'feeding the family' were inter-relating with the categories used by development agents to exclude women from further assistance and support. Although the use of the family idiom may help women to build market-based activities, it may also make it difficult for them to consolidate and expand them.

However, here, it is also important to bring men into the picture. Far from experiencing market reform as the herald of new entrepreneurial labour opportunities, many rural men experienced it as a kind of emasculation and overturning of their role and status. In the countryside, men as well as women were being marginalised from the new market domain, as private farming and trading became located in a shaky position between market and subsistence. For men in particular, this experience was complicated by the new discourses surrounding national identity, work and success in the market sphere. As Gilmore (1990: 187) points out, 'often manhood as an ideology becomes caught up in nationalist or other political movements that temporarily magnify its emotive power.'[232] For most rural men, the reinvented models of manliness, of hero-entrepreneurs conquering the market and making good were unattainable dreams. Instead, rural reform was making it difficult for rural men to maintain the performance of masculinity, whose 'threshold is in the eye of the beholder, a fuzzy demarcation always in need of testing' (Gilmore, 1990: 66). This critical threshold, which must be seen to be crossed, is 'the point at which the boy produces more than he consumes and gives more than he takes' (ibid.: 266). In the Kazak rural gender contract, it was important for 'real men' to be both productive and generous, and waged employment was central to their ability to provide for the family and consolidate their status and authority as head of household through feasts and giving.

In this sense, economic reform was creating painful divisions between men who were able to provide, and others, labelled in both local and state discourse as 'mis-adapted' or 'lazy', who could not do so. As we saw in Chapter 5, the category of beneficiaries of decollectivisation varied from farm to farm, but the language in which they explained their own success and others' failure to benefit from reform centred on ideas about work and morality. Those who did not take up early opportunities were 'lazy' and 'unwilling to work'. Those who had since failed at private farming had done so because they preferred to barter, feast, gift or eat their stock rather than investing in production. The trope of 'hard work' and 'ability to pay from one's own pocket' served as a rationale and justification for the winners' own relative success within the community. On the other hand, like the head of the Sarybulak association, success was also reflected in the ability to 'give' through feasting and generosity, without being 'eaten away' by it. Particularly on Sarybulak and the surrounding farms, this moral discourse was also entwined with religion. Here, the mosques had re-opened and young as well as old men had begun to attend regularly. I found that the new market discourse about work and productivity was mirrored in constructions of Islam: as one man put it, 'Some people just don't want to work. If you work, you live; if there's work, there's hay. In the Koran, there's a

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[232] An interesting comparison can be made between Kazakstan and Gilmore's example of nationalist movement of guru Vivekananda in India, 'for the young men who represented the guru's constituency, this call to manliness was (as it still is for many) an irresistible appeal, because it imbued the search for national identity with the glories of the past and with the justifying imprimatur of sacredness. (...) Here the desire for independence has both a national and psychological relevance'.

passage that says, 'he who works lives better'. The prophet said about Esak, 'let him look after his own flock. I am tired of doing everything for him'.

In the macro-level discourse, it was suggested that men's principle breadwinner role could be translated fairly straightforwardly into their role as head of a family enterprise or entrepreneur. However, for most rural men, private farming and trade could not be a straightforward replacement of work for the state farm, either in economic or moral terms. As discussed in Chapter 5, most enterprises had a combined commercial and subsistence status, which made this new identity an ambiguous and unsteady one. The extent of this ambiguity depended not only on how much income the new activities brought in, but also how they were valued. On Lenin, where men were particularly invested in their position as specialist state employees, many men felt that – even if successful – private farming and trading were 'not real work'. Trade, in particular, was perceived as a female-dominated area, and was seen as 'unmanly', or by Russian respondents as only fit for 'marginal' men such as Uzbeks or Koreans. Women respondents concurred that men 'could not trade'. However, again, discourse masked actual practice. Just as the rural gender contract obscured women's involvement in entrepreneurial or income-generating activities, it also enabled men to engage in 'unmanly' work without compromising their masculinity. For instance, although Kairat's Russian brother-in-law, Victor was explicit that it was shameful for 'strong, grown men' to be seen to be 'selling pies like women,' he did actually trade with his wife. Both prepared the meat for sale, he drove to market and set up the stall, whilst his wife took care of the actual dealing. The fact that he could present marketing as his wife's responsibility and his own contribution as 'help' gave him the space to participate without compromising his masculinity. In contrast, on Druzhba and in the surrounding area, where greater numbers of men had been involved in second economy activity, many men initially embraced both trade and private farming as productive activities which socially re-established them as providers. Here it was often the husband who took responsibility for trade. However, as private farming veered towards subsistence, it was less able to meet men's need either for money or for status. In contrast, on Sarybulak, where subsistence farming was perceived more positively, it also appeared to be more congruent with men's roles and identity.

This discussion has illustrated that processes very similar to those described in Chapter 2 were coming into play as market relations expanded: first, opposition, as the new 'outside' domain of the market was counterpointed to the 'state' and 'inside' domains; second, transposition, as ideas about providing for and feeding the family were extended into the new market domain; third, juxtaposition or bilingualism, as people used the different metaphors of enterpreneurship/self development and family/social responsibility in different circumstances. Just as in the adaptation of indigenous society to socialist development, familiar metaphors of the rural gender contract were being extended into the new environment and shaping the way that communities and individual men and women within them organised their work, perceived their skills and saw their space for opportunity. At the same time, the consensus about gender roles and identities was being constantly stretched and re-aligned in response to rapid change, not least, the actual experience of reform.

III. Gender and the turn to subsistence

As described in Chapter 6, reform was leading not so much to the emergence of a private sector of the economy as the relocation of rural communities as a whole to a new marginal, subsistence economy. As I described in the previous chapter, one marked aspect of this process was the erosion or disappearance of one of the main underpinnings of the household and the rural gender contract – waged labour. The hypothesis set out in feminist critiques of transition was that women were suffering disproportionately from the unemployment caused by restructuring of the state sector, were obliged to assume a growing burden of reproductive labour previously performed by the state and were therefore becoming increasingly 'invisible' in the public sphere.

Initially, in 1996, this analysis seemed to be an accurate reflection of what I was seeing. Market ideology and the local rural gender contract which prioritised the male wage appeared to be combining to impact primarily on the women in my research communities. Layoffs and redundancies had been fastest and strongest in the female-dominated branches of agriculture, processing and social services and talk on both Lenin and Druzhba focused on the fact that women were losing their jobs and that there was no work available for women any more. The closure of kindergartens and the need to boost home food production were also complicating women's work, leading many to focus on these activities. However, two sites of complexity entered into this picture. Firstly, in talking to different women in my research communities, it became obvious that their experiences and feelings about the loss of waged labour varied considerably. Secondly, in bringing men's experiences of and feelings about the loss of employment into the framework of observation and analysis, it became clear that the thesis of women's marginalisation and inequality was much less clear cut.

One vector of differentiation was generation. For the eldest cohort, now retired, the disappearance of state employment was primarily experienced in terms of the erosion of the services they had expected the state farm to provide during their old age. Whilst those without family were often experiencing considerable practical difficulties, others found themselves at the centre of their families' economic strategies, as their experience in subsidiary farming was called upon and their pensions and other benefits became increasingly important resources. Although this generation of women was sometimes nostalgic about the past, their nostalgia was balanced by often harrowing accounts of what they had endured during the hard years of famine, forced deportation and war and they tended to stress their own strength, skills and self-reliance outside state structures.

In contrast, the middle cohort tended to be more nostalgic about work under socialism, often going into great detail in interviews about their previous jobs and expressing a sense of shock and loss. Only some social sector workers, particularly teachers, had been relatively unaffected by the changing employment patterns. Most had seen dramatic changes in their work lives, as their branches of the social services, administration or agriculture were cut back and their burden of work in the domestic economy increased. Many of those who had been made redundant wished to re-enter waged employment, but felt that their labour experience had suddenly become a useless currency and that they were excluded from a

market that now called for young women 'without complexes'. At the same time, this generation represented a majority of those who were turning their previous experience and support networks into a springboard for other income-generating activities such as private farming and trading. Their perceptions of this shift depended on their community, ethnicity and occupation and will be explored in more detail below.

One of the clearest divergences in patterns and perceptions of work was between mothers and their daughters. For the youngest cohort, reform had brought radical changes in expectations about study and employment, as paths that were open to their mothers were filled with new obstacles. Rising living costs, together with the uncertainty about finding work after graduation, meant that study and work were no longer an obvious step towards personal development and autonomy. In all three communities, it appeared that early marriage was becoming more common. Girls who did go on to further study were far more reliant on their families than their mothers, who had benefited from state grants, had been. Several respondents had started but then abandoned their studies, as a result of the difficult environment within colleges and universities as wealthy students 'bought' their success in entrance and exams, and living conditions in student accommodation worsened. Kazak girls often expressed this sense of insecurity in fear about being 'stolen' into marriage against their will. Those who had graduated often found that there was no work in their field or, if they were returning to work after having a child, that their previous jobs had been axed and cut-backs in childcare made it difficult to find alternatives. Many described their situation with the pithy and pejorative phrase 'sitting under a cow', describing how reform had shrunk their horizons and led to a sense of hopelessness or even despair. However, at the same time as highlighting the problems they faced (the shortage of jobs, the fact that many older and more qualified women were seeking work, the closure of childcare facilities, elderly parents needing them at home or husbands 'not giving permission to work') they often also talked of their aspirations to study, work or contribute to building the new society.

These aspirations often diverged or conflicted with the views of their parents, parents-in-law and husbands. Many parents felt that, in a world where doctors and other highly qualified people now traded on the bazaar, socialist models of education and work simply no longer applied to the younger generation. Instead, their expectations were that their daughters would help at home, then get married in their turn. One common pattern was for the mother to become active in farming or trade, whilst her daughter or daughter-in-law assumed responsibility for domestic work. On Druzhba, for example, Gulnara's daughter had trained as a 'commodity researcher' (*tovaroved*), but since there was no work in her field, she had taken on the 'homemaker' role whilst her mother worked as a doctor and private farmer. Similarly, through a combination of economic necessity and moral perceptions about kinship and trust, households involved in private farming or trade often relied on the labour of the younger generation. In this atmosphere, it was difficult, particularly for daughters-in-law, to pursue their own aspirations. Their ability to do so was also influenced by the outlook of their husbands. Although some were supportive, between 1996 and 1998 there was a growing tendency for young men to adopt a form of the rhetoric employed at macro level. Young Kazak men, in particular, invoked 'tradition', explaining that Kazak girls always got married young, Kazak women always 'sat at home', did the cooking and looked after the children and that there was no need for a wife to work if the man could provide. The

example of Fatima's daughter-in-law, set out in the life history appendix, illustrates well how the combination of family labour requirements, 'old' and 'reinvented' custom were combining to limit the opportunities of many young women. However, this was not the only pattern. On Druzhba, the daughters of the wealthier rural producers, who did not rely on family labour, were often able to go to Almaty to study the newly prestigious disciplines of economics or business. One of Dina's daughters was studying business whilst also working as a fashion model. On Lenin, the pattern of younger marriage and curtailment of studies was countered by another pattern of young women finding work in private enterprises in the nearby towns.

Cutting across generational differences was a spatial/ethnic and socio-occupational element, which was expressed in the metaphors for talking about the loss of state employment. Just as waged work had played different roles in women's identities, its disappearance now meant different things to different women. For the women who were previously most invested in the Soviet model of labour, who drew a sense of competence and independence from their jobs, unemployment came as a dramatic and negative change in their personal circumstances. These informants often entered into long and impassioned narratives about their past employment experience, emphasising the challenges they had faced and what they had gained from their jobs. In contrast, they spoke about losing employment in terms of becoming marginal or invisible, losing the security of state protection and their position in society. The term they generally used to talk about their current circumstances was *'sidet' doma*' - literally, that they were 'sitting at home'. In actual fact, this local term, with its connotations of idleness and laziness, was a mis- or non-recognition of the actual tenor of their days, filled with never-ending chores relating to feeding and caring for their households.

Table 7.1: Activities relating to 'sitting at home'

Cooking : now also including baking bread
Caring for children and elderly relatives
Cleaning
Making clothes
Cultivating the vegetable plot
Looking after the animals and yard: including feeding, milking, separating the milk and making butter and cheese.
Preparing food for winter
Informal trade
Work on the private farm

These informal or domestic activities could clearly also be considered as work. However, although many explicitly used the word '*rabota*' (work) when talking about these activities, and expressed pride that they were crucial to their families' survival, their value was at best ambivalent and reflected the denigration of the private over the public sphere in the Soviet and capitalist model of labour. In contrast to waged labour, this was not seen as 'real work'.

In contrast, the loss of waged labour was perceived rather differently by many women on Sarybulak and in the outlying villages on Lenin. Instead of referring to their circumstances as

'sitting at home' they would use the much more active and positive term *'zanimatsya khozyaistvom'* or 'taking care of the domestic economy'. Here, where the folk model of labour and value continued to have greater currency, work in the domestic sphere was perceived as a valid and valuable activity. This is not to say that individual women necessarily accepted their situation with open arms or that they would have chosen to leave waged work of their own accord. It was rather that local model of work allowed them to validate their activities as real and significant work in a way that the Soviet and capitalist model of labour and value did not.

Table 7.2: Women's perceptions of the loss of waged work

	Druzhba	**Lenin**	**Sarybulak**
'Sitting at home'	Central village and *Otdeleniye* Cross nationality Factory workers Technicians Administration Social sector Agriculture	Central village and *otdeleniye* Cross nationality Administration Social sector Agriculture	Central village Kazak: no slav population Administration Social sector
'Taking care of the domestic economy'	*Otdeleniy* Turkish minority, Seasonal agricultural workers who formerly marketed their own produce	*Otdeleniye* Kazak women formerly working in agriculture	Central village, *Otdeleniye, Otara* Administration Social sector Agriculture New private farmers

Local models of labour therefore gave some women ways of finding value that were not available to others. On the other hand, it was only on Sarybulak that men used the positive term *'zanimatsya khozyaistvom'* to talk about women's work, showing a divergence between women's and men's understandings of 'reproductive' labour. Even on Sarybulak, men who were unemployed did not use the term to refer to their own activities.

In the second year of fieldwork (1997) I noted a puzzling change of discourse on Lenin as people began to say that 'only women work now'. This change in emphasis went to the heart of the changing forms and meanings of work in the countryside and the disruption of the rural gender contract. At first sight, it seemed to fly in the face of the evidence. No new employment opportunities for women had been created; if anything female redundancies and unemployment seemed to have been stepped up with the closure of the hospital and cutbacks in the farm administration. However, considered in relation to changing work structure described in Chapter 6, the new language took on a clearer meaning. One factor was that money wages were now only being paid in the traditionally female service sector. Although many women in these branches had lost their jobs, those who remained were becoming increasingly important as income-earners. Another clue lay in the way people had talked about female redundancies the previous year. As one woman put it, 'soon there won't even be

any work for men any more'. In other words, it was not that female unemployment trends had suddenly been reversed, but that men's traditional areas of employment were now also threatened and with them the 'male wage'. As I have described, by 1997, state enterprise had entirely disappeared on Druzhba and was losing its meaning on Lenin. Here, although many men were still nominally employed by the former state farm, money wages were not being paid and short-time work and redundancy had begun to affect them too. The work of the rural population as a whole was being made 'invisible' and 'reproductive' rather than 'visible' and 'productive' and many rural men, as much as rural women, were being 'relocated' against their will to the domestic domain.

Although both sexes reacted with consternation to the disappearance of the wage and of labour in the public sector, it was the erosion of men's work and wages that was perceived by both sexes to be a fundamental threat to the normal order of things, both in terms of household strategies and individual identities. At a household level, the loss of the husband's wage was seen as a much more threatening than that of the wife. For men, whose work and home identity had centred around their ability to provide for their families, the erosion of waged employment in the public sector came as a body blow. The collapse of the state farm, together with the new discourse around opportunities for success complicated their breadwinner role, raising expectations of them being able to provide at a time when it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to do so. As one respondent explained:

> 'It may not look it to you, but things are very difficult. I don't know how it is where you come from, but here from the dawn of time it has been the man who has provided for the family, his wife and children, fed the family. Before you brought home your salary. Now, everything is a headache: where to get hay, where to get coal, where to get firewood, where to get the money to pay for it, how to get it all back home. All that is on your shoulders now.' (Conversation. Lenin, 22.8.98)

Many male respondents were suffering acute anxiety about being able to 'provide'. A recent statistical study (Buckley, C. 1997) identified a rising suicide rate among Kazakstani men and put forward the hypothesis that they were experiencing a particular identity crisis[233]:

> 'The age and sex patterns found in Kazakstan suggest that women are less susceptible to the identity challenges associated with the transition period and that men in their 20s and 60s are most susceptible. (...) In Kazakstan where males hold more responsibility for the public and economic spheres, their identities are tied more closely to external dichotomous factors such as career success, income and public recognition. Kazak women, who are held more responsible for reproduction and holding families together, find internal procedural relations more central to their individual identity. The lack of any substantial increase in female suicide rates may reflect the greater emphasis placed on the family as an informal support network (and hence the role of women) during the transition or the small role labour outside the home plays in women's self concepts'.

Whilst I would disagree that work outside the home played a small role in women's self concept, it was clear that women's roles in household and public sphere were less consonant.

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[233] Buckley gives the figure of a 36.6% rise in male suicide rates and 2.2% rise in female suicide rates between 1990 and 1994. To my knowledge, three young men committed suicide during my fieldwork, two on Lenin and one on Druzhba.

Unlike men, their identity was spread over different roles, duties and responsibilities. In the new environment, their greater responsibility for general household well-being was translated into myriad survival strategies, as they brought all the resources at their disposal, including domestic food production, social networks and trading, into play. As discussed above, with the exception of shepherds on Sarybulak, similar 'survival' activities were not considered a 'proper' replacement for men's position in waged labour.

The change in men's status was making the home a highly contested environment and leading to disputes over gender roles. On Lenin, discourse analysis of conversations about reactions to the changes produced a series of gendered qualities: women were said to be *gibkie* (flexible), *shustrie* (quick on the uptake), *pobystree prisposablivayutsya* (more adaptable), whereas men were said to be lazy, jealous and drunk or to be *pskhuyut* (psyching out) and *skandalyat doma* (making scenes at home). The perception was that women were now taking on the male role of family provider, 'doing what had to be done', whereas men were opting out in various ways, such as resorting to alcohol. As one woman put it:

> 'Everywhere, women are carrying the load (*rabotyagi*). They're the ones supporting the family. Men, especially Kazak men, don't understand the changes. They were used to working eight hours a day, getting paid. Now they've just gone to pieces, turned to drink (*seichas slomalis, spilis*). Turkish men will go and trade with their women, Korean men will go and work in the fields. But our men just give up. Wives are carrying their husbands on their shoulders. You must have seen how many women are on the bazaars, trading. Someone has to feed and clothe the children.'[234]

Within households, I began to see kinds of open conflict and disputes between Kazak husbands and wives that I did not observe during my first period of fieldwork. The following extract from my 1998 Lenin fieldnotes provides a graphic example. This was a household where the husband, the former *sovkhoz* economist, was now unemployed and where his wife was attempting to persuade him to find another job:

> Gulsum: "No women want to have children now. And anyway, why should I have a child for my husband when he is not working? What has he done to deserve another child? I'm on sexual strike as well. I don't have a huge sex drive and neither does he, for whatever reason – but he is a man and does want sex once a month. I can't even be thinking about it – how can you think about sex when you have to think about survival, worry about the children, where to get food, how to get the money for school. So I goad him. He just sits there, day in, day out, and doesn't even seem to be thinking about how he is going to provide for his family. So, no sex until he gets moving and finds work. He gets angry. But at least he doesn't hit me. I've heard about cases like that, when a man is refused and beats up his wife[235]. I call him my 'little souvenir' because he sits at home all day..."
> While Gulsum was preparing lunch, her husband, came home. He looked awful, his black hair standing up in unkempt tufts, very scruffy, probably a vodka glaze in his eyes, a little unsteady on his feet. Over lunch there was a good deal of tension. She said she wanted to find a new husband, a rich one with a car. Her sister said, half joking and half serious, 'you say that in front of your husband?' He laughed

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[234] Conversation with Aigul, Rodnikovsky, Fieldnotes September 1997.
[235] Domestic violence was common, as I saw from shadowing the village healer for several days. The majority of the women who came to see her wanted 'cures' for alcoholic husbands who had beaten them

uncomfortably. Gulsum said that she told people that he is her 'little souvenir' or her 'oldest son'. 'What's the use of him when he sits at home all the time?' He got up and went out. A little later a man came in to buy vodka. He wanted to take it on credit. Gulsum consulted with her sister – she knew the man, who was a neighbour, his mother was waiting for her pension, but would have money soon. He needed the bottle to pay the man who was helping to unload hay for him. Gulsum said that her sister's instincts were usually right and gave him the bottle. Her husband stormed back in and started shouting, saying she shouldn't have done so. 'I've had it up to here with you,' she says. Then generally to the room, 'he sits here, useless and then tries to put on airs as though he was the khozyain. It's a good thing my daughters are quick on the uptake (*shustrie*). My son's the only one who's like him.'

Economic change therefore appeared to be fundamentally restructuring gender relations in unexpected ways. As waged labour was eroded and people were pushed into survival strategies based on the domestic sphere, women were perceived to be coping and men failing. This realignment of gender roles was expressed in two stories that were circulating in the research communities, usually recounted second-hand as something that had happened to someone else. The first tells of a child who has begun to address his mother as *mapa* (mother and father) since she is the one who 'works, brings home the money and does everything for us'. The second tells of a man who runs into an acquaintance he has not seen for some time. The man asks him what he is doing now. 'Oh, you know, Zh.K.O', he replies. Puzzled, the man asks whether this is some kind of new organisation. 'Oh no, comes the answer, *'zhena kormit, odevaet'* (my wife feeds and clothes me).

Interpreting these stories – and the reality behind them – is not as straightforward as it might appear. Rather than expressing a radical change in the rural gender contract, they need to be looked at more subtly in terms of both continuity and change. First, although these stories pointed to the new prominence of women's activities, they also referred implicitly to the rural gender contract and the two sexes' expectations of it. Women would often go on to talk about how they were keeping things together while men were falling apart, whereas it was 'men's role' to provide for the family. Conversely, men would often go on to make 'joking' asides about women now being 'behind the wheel' and, for Kazak men, about their women becoming 'Russified' and no longer respecting their authority as '*khozyain*'. Implicitly, men's 'proper' roles as provider and authority were highlighted at the same time that anxiety and uncertainty were being expressed about them. As discussed in the example of Kairat's private farm, most women did not welcome this shift in roles. In that instance, Kairat's wife was happy to use private farming as a means of 'shoring up' her husband's role and identity. Similarly, even where wives berated their husbands for their failure to fulfil their breadwinner role, or used it as grounds for separation or divorce, this did not call the role itself into question. In these circumstances, it was rather that women were goading men into fulfilling their part of the gender contract or seeking another man who would be able to fulfil it. The perception was that this change in gender roles was a temporary departure from the 'natural' balance, which would soon be righted[236].

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[236] As in this example, it was common for women to refer to omens or clairvoyance: 'Wives are carrying their husbands... A psychic from Dzhambul said that these difficulties would last for 7 years from the election of the President. Five have already gone by. Already things are getting better - pensioners are being paid. Soon maybe the men that have been sitting at home will be able to get work from the pensioners.'

Second, to cite Ingrid Rudie (1994: 159) once again, stories of lazy husbands and industrious wives are a 'mythlike theme that surfaces to demonstrate the economic potential of women'. From this perspective, we can see them both as a reflection of men's anxieties about being an adequate provider and of women's insistence on the value of their work and economic potential at a time when this role was actually being undermined in the market sector.

Third, at a 'deep structural level' the stories did not reflect a departure from social and cultural norms. Just as the radical changes brought by socialist development led to a focus on women as the lynchpin of the household and/or ethnos, women were again being figured as the source of stability.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

'Perhaps the story of development is more than just 'one damn thing after another': it is a story of unfolding, of one thing leading to another in a process which can be given some meaning. But the trouble seems to be one of time lags... [T]he development thinkers seem to base their action and thought on experiences of the last-but-one decade or a last-but-one phase, only to be overwhelmed by the inappropriateness of such action and thought in the face of new events and new problems. Is it perhaps a case of a problem for every solution, rather than a solution for every problem? This seems to come close to the truth. It can be presented pessimistically as always reacting too late and to an obsolete situation; or more optimistically as a learning process." (Singer, 1989, p. 3 Lessons of Post-War Development Experience: 1945-1988, Discussion Paper 260, April, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.)

This thesis has been about the relationship between two very different conceptions of what development is and how it takes place: 1) development as consisting of deliberate efforts aimed at 'progress' on the part of various agencies, including governments, various kinds of organisations and social movements; and 2) development as a historical process of social change in which societies are transformed over long periods (Thomas, 1992: 7). Focusing specifically on gender issues in rural areas, the research set out to use field-based, qualitative methodologies to explore the deliberate efforts of the Kazakstani government and international community to change a socialist society into a market capitalist one and the ways these efforts were mediated by local forms of economy and culture and understandings of value, seen in a long-term perspective of historical change from through pre-socialist to Soviet and post-socialist society.

The analysis presented here has operated on two levels: firstly, it has explored the ways in which gender issues have been incorporated (or otherwise) into the policies of different development agencies and, secondly, it has examined how actual processes of enterprise-level privatisation and restructuring have been played out, and the manner in which they are gendered. This concluding chapter draws these two levels together, by spelling out the implications of the ethnography for macro-level policies and further research.

Complexity and development practice

Between 1996 and 1998, there was increasing recognition on the part of the Kazakstani government and donor agencies that the emerging rural economy did not resemble the planned blueprint for the agricultural sector. In jargon of the 'transition', two issues not foreseen at the outset of reform were the 'apparent stability of partial reform equilibriums' (in other words, the persistence of large cooperative enterprises) and the 'perverse relationship between privatisation and quality of governance' (i.e. insider privatisation and the

accompanying increase in inequality and breakdown of trust)(World Bank, 2002: xxvi). Rising rural unemployment and poverty and declining services and quality of life were also acknowledged, although generally addressed separately from the restructuring of state and collective farms. However, despite this acknowledgement, donor and government explanations of these outcomes and proposals for further action were not informed by close analysis of local patterns of transformation. In particular, the ways in which gendered models of work and family operated in local contexts and how these might impact on people's responses to the new opportunities and obstacles presented by reform, fell outside the mainstream development framework.

One of the key arguments of this thesis has been that, without a better understanding of local processes, development cannot work, either in its own terms, or in terms of responding to what people want and need. The research contributes to the call for 'detailed ethnographies that reveal both the intended and unintended effects of (development) policies, as well as the responses of those who are at the receiving end' (Kandiyoti, 2002: 252). More specifically, it is situated within an approach which has attempted to formulate 'less misleading models of social processes than those proposed in macro-level models' (Stirling, 1993: 15) by investigating the links between place-based conceptions of the economy and social and cultural life. As Stirling puts it, 'the fund of cosmologies, myths, religious ideas, historical narratives, political models, private moralities, customs, rites, technologies and scientific ideas, which exists in any society at any given point in time must profoundly affect the way that the economy functions and the way it changes; and economic growth must in turn have profound and multifarious consequences for that fund' (ibid.: 4). In this way, the ethnography adds a building block to a new area of research in Central Asia, which investigates how 'everyday practices of ordinary people participating in the economy according to their own priorities, social pressures and values' impacts on the trajectory of market reform, and vice versa (Mandel and Humphrey, 2002: 12).

The particular strength of the anthropological perspective of the research was to illustrate *how* macro-level policies were masking and disguising the local processes that were playing an important role in shaping rural economies and *how* the meeting of macro and local processes were often having negative effects.

By mapping the different kinds of enterprises resulting from the decollectivisation reform in connection with local farming systems, perceptions of privatisation and models of work and family, the research suggested that development was being planned with a model of civil society in mind that had only limited sense at local level. The vision of 'liberating' individuals to create profit-oriented businesses was often in tension with strongly-rooted local models of work, entitlement and community that influenced individual, household and community strategies and were generating their own economic patterns. On former sovkhoz Lenin, 'resistance' to reform could be partially explained by conventionally-cited factors, such as lack of information and the attitudes of local authorities and the farm management. However, the villagers' decision to 'stay together' was also motivated by their perception that large, cooperative enterprises were not only the most effective way of conducting agricultural production in a risky environment but also the most 'moral' or 'civilised' way of organising work and community life. On Druzhba and Sarybulak, various factors, including

the pro-reform attitude of local authorities, farming system and different relationships to the state and second economy, had contributed to the larger number of private farms. However, here too, the model envisaged at macro-level failed to capture the range of activities, interests and strategies in these enterprises. It was only if the complex relationships between private farms and wider household and kinship survival strategies were ignored that the new farms 'fit' the planned model of profit-oriented farm businesses run by single entrepreneurs. By failing to address the complex interactions between economic, social and cultural forces, well-intentioned macro-level policy was therefore not only failing to create what it intended, but also mis-recognising what it encountered and forcing local realities into ill-adapted moulds.

In addition, the meeting of macro models and local practices was having negative effects that called into question the whole notion of privatisation bringing a new form of modernity and progress. In a process of cumulative advantage and disadvantage, reform was heightening inequality, dividing the rural sector from the rest of the economy and one former state farm from another and separating the trajectories of their individual members. In comparison to the efforts deployed to reform 'key' sectors such as the oil and gas industries, the agricultural sector as a whole came a poor second or third. Within it, some communities, such as Druzhba, which enjoyed advantages such as a propitious geographical position and external assistance, were playing the new development game, whilst others, such as Lenin, were increasingly marginalised from it and risked bankruptcy and disintegration. Within rural communities, rather than opening new opportunities, the new forms of land tenure and ownership were reproducing and intensifying inequality. Rights over land and assets were being concentrated in the hands of a minority, often those who formerly held powerful positions in the state farm hierarchy, whilst the majority of villagers were experiencing rural reform as an erosion of their former economic and social entitlements. In other words, rather than creating a new model of democratic civil society and market economy, the direct impact of reform was to produce rural communities that were essentially maintaining basic subsistence activities. At the same time, as further support went to 'efficient' forms of farming enterprise or civil society organisation which appeared to fit the planned model, rather than to subsistence or alternative local forms, reform threatened to deepen the emerging division between market and subsistence domains. The example of the Lenin *otdeleniye* and the Sarybulak shepherds demonstrated that, for certain groups or communities, being 'outside' or 'marginal' to the new public market domain was not perceived as a threat, or that the combination of the new possibilities of trade and marketing of livestock and the domestic economy could be 'the good life'. For others, this was perceived as a painful, unstable and untenable situation.

Development, gender and 'collateral damage'

By exploring how gender entered into the processes described above, the fieldwork challenged the assumption that decollectivisation was a gender neutral process. Looking through and for a model of an efficient agricultural sector based on private, profit-making enterprises, planners failed to understand women's particular position and concerns: how women had benefited from the balance of productive and welfare services embodied in the state farms and what the moves towards private farming, based on family enterprises, meant

to them and their view of themselves. For many men, as well as women, becoming farmers was seen as going 'backwards' from 'modern' work on the *sovkhoz* with its clear structure of skills and specialisation. Other men identified with the concept of becoming a private farmer, which dovetailed well with male roles in the family division of labour and authority, although in practice, many found the new status an impossible mirage or more difficult to negotiate than the planners or they themselves envisaged. However, for women, in particular, going into private farming meant going back into the household and losing the particular social space that work in the public sector provided and that made them feel 'like human beings'[237]. For them, agricultural work in the new family farms was domestic space, often under direct male authority, where their farming activities merged into other domestic tasks and were invisible or unrecognised. This was a particularly painful prospect for women who had lost their jobs in specialised occupations, which provided far more than an income. It was perhaps less so for women, such as the shepherds on Sarybulak, whose roles in public and domestic production had always been more consonant. But here too, for a younger generation of women, the move to private farming was often seen as painful limiting of horizons. More broadly, the sexual division of labour meant that the shift to subsistence was putting increasing burdens on women, who not only took on the main share of caring for children, the elderly and the sick, but also much of the responsibility for providing food and 'foraging' for the family through trade and other informal strategies. The resilience, strength and creativity of women were therefore crucial to maintaining families' well-being and a relative sense of security and stability. For some, these activities brought a sense of achievement and a strengthening of their position within the family. For many, the price was a feeling of marginality, powerlessness and sometimes despair, that lay underneath the veneer of the coping persona.

The research demonstrated that gender was not the only factor in exclusion and inequality. However, aspects of Boserup's (1970) argument around the feminisation of subsistence and Rogers' (1980) critique of the 'domestication of women', presented in Chapter 1, are depressingly pertinent to the current situation in rural Kazakstan. There are lessons to be learned here both for the Kazakstani government and for the donor agencies and organisations working in the country's rural areas. Gender issues have been largely invisible in macro-level policy-making and programmes. The reasons for this are connected with the development framework being applied in the country, the power relationship between government and donor agencies and the legacy of how gender issues were approached under the Soviet regime. Firstly, the 'transition' paradigm has prioritised economic and technical development over social concerns, including gender. As such, it is not qualitatively different, for example, from structural adjustment policies being applied elsewhere, but the way in which development practitioners have conceived of 'transition' in relation to 'development' has added a further layer of gender blindness. In Kazakstan, the government and international agencies (with the notable exception of the UNDP) explicitly prioritised macro-economic objectives and initially excluded a range of 'development' issues, including redistributive measures of social well-being, such as life-expectancy, literacy, school-enrolment, equality of income distribution and the liberation of women, which are

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[237] In 'Retreat to the household', Pine (2002: 100-103) describes a very similar pattern in postsocialist Poland.

considered relevant in other settings. Secondly, Kazakstan's high income from oil and gas reserves has given it a relatively large space to manoeuvre and resist pressures from donor agencies in areas such as democratisation and poverty reduction, where most of their gender programmes have been focused. Thirdly, the way in which gender issues were bound up with socialist ideology and are now being incorporated into nationalist and state-building discourses has also mitigated against detailed analysis of the ways in which reform is actually impacting differently on women and men. However, although analysis of gender issues has been largely lacking in rural reform policy, it has nevertheless carried a strong gender bias. As in the colonial policies critiqued by Boserup, an assumption that women were not involved in agricultural production has been carried through into the rural development approach of the major donor organisations in Kazakstan. Women's work in the spheres of subsistence agriculture and domestic labour has gone largely unrecognised and women 'subsistence' farmers have been bypassed in favour of male 'commercial' farmers. Rural reform policy is therefore playing a role in creating a feminised dichotomy between market and subsistence agriculture. Whilst rural women themselves are struggling to define new possibilities and opportunities within national and local discourses, these discourses are excluding women from new opportunities and pushing them into invisibility in the home. From this perspective, the stability and status of women's 'informal' or 'domestic' work is threatened by the new development discourse and practice itself.

To situate the research in the context of the arguments around women as 'winners' or 'losers' of reform, the findings echo those of Pine, who concludes that there are two senses in which 'the new democracy is a masculinist democracy':

> Many of the structures and mechanisms associated with building the privatized, market economy favour what are established male practices and prerogatives and limit those of women. Second, the division between public and private, which pre-dates socialism as an ideological construct but was exacerbated under socialism, is being reformulated in ways which exaggerate the established tendency to associate women with domestic and household activities and production, and which conversely make it easier for men than for women to move horizontally within the public domain' (2002: 102-3).

In order to challenge this situation, government and development agencies working in rural areas of Kazakstan would need to look beyond their own gendered assumptions about the roles of women and men in rural production to see their contribution for what it really is. What are the prospects, if any of this taking place?

One factor that may encourage consideration of gender issues is the ongoing shift in development paradigms. Current questions with considerable resonance for development practice as well as academic debate concern the relationship between economic and social or 'human' visions of development and the connection between development management and questions of power and strategy (Dichter, 2000; Kabeer, 1994; Thomas, 2000). At global level, the past decade has seen an apparent softening of the neo-liberal agenda of the 1980s towards a new international consensus on 'social development' reached at the Copenhagen Summit in 1995 and a growing focus on poverty alleviation. The 'transition' paradigm of development I have described in relation to Kazakstan cannot be seen in isolation from this

shift. The neo-liberal agenda (structural reform, economic liberalization, rapid privatisation), which began to soften elsewhere in the 1990s (Hewitt, 2000), continued to apply longer and in more undiluted form in 'transition' countries, including Kazakstan. Nevertheless, here too, as we have observed, between 1995 and 1998, there was a move towards a more 'social' development perspective on the part of the development agencies and government. Since 1998, this has become more marked, as the negative impact of reform on many sectors of the population has become increasingly clear. Taking a broad regional approach, the World Bank's report, *Transition, The First Ten Years: Analysis and Lessons for Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union,* published in 2002, observes that in the CIS region as a whole, one in five people are now living below the poverty line (compared to 1 in 25 a decade before) and that inequality has increased so much that these states have 'come to rival the most unequal countries in the world' (p. xi). It notes that a new panoply of social policies have been introduced 'to protect the most vulnerable groups until growth takes hold' (ibid, p. ix). Likewise, in Kazakstan itself, the widespread poverty in rural areas has been acknowledged. In 2004, a six-year rural revival program was launched. This initiative has been promoted by President Nazarbaev as the largest infusion ever made in the country's agricultural sector and includes large investments in the construction of hospitals, roads and schools.

Is this paradigm shift likely to lead to gender issues being addressed in a more substantive way in government and agencies' rural development policy and programmes? My own research and the lessons learned elsewhere suggest that no such direct equation can be assumed. I have flagged that, by 1998, the greater emphasis on social aspects of reform and the increasing recognition of gender issues by at least some organisations had not in fact led to gender issues being included in any more systematic way in rural development projects on the ground. The analysis of the Druzhba farmer support project also highlighted that, even where projects appeared to follow a more 'people-oriented' approach, in the absence of in-depth social and gender analysis or monitoring, even 'participatory' projects failed to address existing gender inequalities or the gender impacts of projects themselves. These outcomes could be imputed to the time-lag between the ideological shift to a more socially-oriented model of development and its implementation in practice. If this were so, an optimistic prognosis would be that, as lessons were learned from the painful processes of rural restructuring and as the social and 'human' aspects of development were given more weight, the different impacts of rural reform on women and men would be acknowledged and addressed in government and agency policy and programmes.

However, gender 'blind spots' may persist despite sometimes major shifts in development paradigms. Studies on the link between the new focus on poverty and the inclusion of gender issues in poverty reduction strategy papers, which are now commonly drawn up between national governments and development agencies, have demonstrated that improvements in mainstreaming gender have been patchy (Zuckerman and Garrett, 2003). More broadly, analysts have pointed to a continued 'failure to reconcile new social policy, education and health objectives with 'structural adjustment' requirements' (Kalb, 2002: 330). The more radical proponents of an ethical, human-centred globalisation are scathing about any such tinkering with the dominant neo-liberal model. Vandana Shiva, for instance calls for a radical review of the 'neoliberal relationship between private/public domains and the assumption that everything can be privatised – land, water, electricity – which profits a minority and

externalises costs on populations, particularly the rural poor, making them pay for what was once theirs and depriving them of what they need to meet their basic needs.' Making the connection between this process and gender, she also argues that 'the market as the driving force shaping culture is pushing patriarchy to unimaginable levels' (2003). Instead, her vision is of an 'earth democracy', an ethical rather than a purely economic globalisation, one that will not only benefit the minority able to control and access capital, goods and resources but will create a planetary community in which everyone can access good life and culture[238].

The prospect of such an 'earth democracy' being introduced in Kazakstan seems remote. Although oil revenues continue to pour into the country, capital, goods and resources seem likely to remain concentrated in the hands of a minority (Nazpary, 2002). For rural areas in particular, although the state is making major investments in the six year rural revival program launched in 2004, initial reports suggest that it may primarily benefit those who are already in a strong position. In pursuit of the key objective to 'put farmers on a competitive footing' and 'enhance the country's investment image' support is to be concentrated in areas with the strongest farm industry and there are plans to move agricultural workers from the more economically depressed regions (Nurskenova, 2004). In fact, despite the dramatic decline in well-being which is one of the most visible outcomes of transition policy, both government and the major donor agencies (again with the exception of UNDP) continue to define development primarily as a question of spurring economic growth through more sustained and intensive market reform. The World Bank report on the lessons to be learned from ten years of reform, cited above is instructive. It states clearly that 'policy-makers cannot postpone the pain of liquidating and restructuring the old sector until the cushion provided by the new enterprises is in place' (2002: p. xxviii). In this context, the introduction of new social policies may not represent a serious change in direction, merely an add-on, designed to palliate the 'collateral damage' caused by economic restructuring. Indeed, the very structure of the World Bank's report embodies the continued split between economic and social policy, which is mentioned only briefly in the main body of the text. Nor have past limitations on the way gender is addressed been challenged. Gender issues get no mention at all in the main report, only in a separate, accompanying report, on poverty. And here, gender policy takes the form of defining specific measures for women, who are seen as 'one of the most vulnerable groups.' As Kandiyoti fears, in this context, women-directed policies may come to represent the 'welfare' arm of monetarist policies and serve as part of a series of stop-gap measures to buffer some of the most visible negative outcomes of transition policies (Kandiyoti, 1990: 12).

Understanding Complexity

The opening citation for this final chapter notes that the interventions of development agencies can be seen either pessimistically, as always reacting too late and to an obsolete situation, or more optimistically, as a learning process. Their efforts at engineered change also need to be seen against the background of more long-term social transformation.

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[238] Vandana Shiva, speech to the Global Progressive Forum, European Parliament, Brussels, November 27-9, 2003.

How does change happen? What happens when individuals shape their lives within discourses shaped by competing agencies, such as the state, workplace and family? How are gender divisions reproduced or altered? A concern with the interrelations between individual experience, structuring forces and local practice has run throughout this thesis. One of the key challenges in understanding and trying to model this process in rural Kazakstan has been the particular combination of what Hann terms 'revolutions and cyclical repetitive change' (1994c: 9). The relationship between life-cycle changes, long-term change over generations and sudden, very rapid transformation is difficult to untangle in communities which have experienced both intervals of relative stability and two radical transformations of political and economic system over the past eighty years.

Through the exploration of the 'rural gender contract' and how it was accommodating to change I aimed both to look at how power relations between men and women were shifting and to provide a window on wider processes of cultural change and continuity. I argued that the Soviet state attempted to impose a particular division between public and domestic spheres, which interrelated with indigenous ideas about the appropriate organisation of family and work lives and male and female domains. In a dual process, new situations stretched existing categories, whilst existing categories were also carried across to new situations. Distinctions between public and domestic or outside and inside domains were more flexible in practice than they appeared to be, either in local or official discourse. They were also to do with power. Within the household, the value and power of the different domains was negotiated between their members: husbands and wives, mothers and daughters-in-law. Outside the household, the power of different household members to act was constrained in different ways. Under the socialist gender regime, the state implicitly repaid production with care and protection, especially of women and children. Conversely, women's opportunities and desire to respond to state exhortations to work and participate in public life were constrained by their domestic and caring responsibilities. For Kazak women, in particular, the 'outside' domain represented a domain under male authority to which entrance had to be negotiated.

The current reform threw the pieces of this evolving power jigsaw into the air. The 'big pieces' – the state, the economic system and the *sovkhozy* and other institutions representing them – were suddenly displaced. With them went the 'little pieces' – people's jobs, incomes, childcare, housing, pensions – along with the accustomed balance of power within households and the sense of identity and security that accompanied them. Nevertheless, I ended Chapter 7 by evoking the 'deep structural' level at which women were once again being figured as the source of stability and the lynchpin of household strategies and the imagined new national community.

The ethnography of changing gender domains presented in this thesis contributes to the ongoing debate amongst social anthropologists (in particular) about the relationship between local social organisation and Soviet institutions, and its impact on current trajectories of change (Hann, Humphrey and Verdery, 2002). The debate has been particularly acute in the context of Central Asia, where there is a polarisation between three approaches. The first argues that Central Asian societies remained marginal to state socialism, meaning that 'traditional' society was maintained and there is consequently no need to address the

relationship between the actual workings of the Soviet system and postsocialism. The second recognises that 'traditional' society was recomposed under the Soviet system, but argues that its collapse has led to a quasi-reversion to pre-Soviet forms of solidarity that ultimately transcend time and context. The third argues that 'reform is producing novel forms, that cannot be fully grasped through an analysis of pre-Soviet forms or their recomposition under the Soviet system' (Kandiyoti, 2002: 248)[239].

This ethnography has supported the third approach. The research pointed to the continued importance of the past, in this case both a Soviet and a pre-Soviet past, in the way that individuals and communities are adapting to the present. It has illustrated that the ways in which local forms of social organisation, in this case, gender domains, interacted with Soviet institutions is having an impact on current trajectories of change. However, it was not simply a question of a 'reversion' to indigenous gender domains left somehow untouched by Soviet modernisation. Inside and outside domains had accommodated to the socialist model of public and domestic spheres and both were being renegotiated in the new context of the emerging private enterprises and market economy. As Pine cautions, 'in the post-socialist world, particularly, any discussion of continuity and change is complicated by the fact that many social and economic processes, which appear to be quite new, demonstrate under closer scrutiny a marked similarity to older relations and practices, whilst others which appear to be continuities are taking place in contexts which are drastically different from any that previously existed' (2002: 98). Speaking as the mother of a small child, the image which my research brings to mind is that of building blocks: some from home, others added or taken away by a capricious state, all used in ways not necessarily envisaged by their makers.

As different geopolitical situations, systems of governance and locations in the global economy cause the development paths of the various post-socialist states to diverge, the question of how long it will be appropriate to speak of, write of and think of a category called 'postsocialism' is now being raised (Hann, Humphrey and Verdery, 2002). Like various other ethnographic studies of postsocialist rural communities, this research suggests that socialism continues to be an important point of reference for many people and is likely to remain so for a number of years, even if generational change lessens its direct relevance (Hivon, 1995; Kaneff, 1996; Konstantinov and Vladimirova, 2002)[240]. What is clear is that these complex processes of long-term transformation are still relevant, not only to the individuals and communities concerned, or to anthropologists, but also to the development community.

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[239] Kandiyoti's analysis of these three approaches or models contains detailed illustrations of particular case-studies, including Roy's work on collective farms in Central Asia, in relation to the second approach, and Humphrey's study of a collective farm in Buryatiya and her own ethnography of a state farm in Uzbekistan, in relation to the third.

[240] See also the contributions in Anderson and Pine, 1995; Bridger and Pine, 1998; Kandiyoti and Mandel, 1998; Burawoy and Verdery, 1999; Mandel and Humphrey, 2002 and Hann, et al, 2002. The latter gives a detailed overview of the key areas of anthropological research of postsocialism.

APPENDIX 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE RESEARCH COMMUNITIES

Former Sovkhoz Lenin

	1994	1996	1997
Total	1,954	1,653	1,509
Households		531	446
Women		900	
Men		703	
Pensioners		152 (80 women)	
Children		50	
Sovkhoz employees		583	
Centre (Dal'nee)	792 222 households		610 184 households
1 (Zhuantobe) (cereal production)	292 79 households		274 69 households
2 (Limannoe) (cereal production)	333 85 households		194 55 households
3. (Kyzltas) (cereal and livestock)	300 79 households		104 71 households
4. (Yugo-Vostok) (cereal and livestock)	237 66 households		237 67 households

Out-migration

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
No. of people	106	102	123	168	116	93	60

N.B. Detailed records with breakdown by age, gender and ethnicity were not kept. In addition, the records only listed those who officially "deregistered" (*vypisyvalis'*) and were therefore only indicative since many people left "temporarily" and continued to be registered in the community. Some further details were garnered from an interview with the administrator responsible. According to her information, largely from personal memory, in 1991, 56 men and 50 women left the community. These included the Director, who was transferred to the local town to work as deputy Akim and left taking his wife and family, two families who left for Germany and three who left for Russia. Of the others, many were young people (aged 17 to 18) : 6 people (2 boys and 4 girls) left to go into higher education; 44 people (23 boys and 21 girls) left to find other work. Of the male adults, most left to take up other work, mostly in the local town, either in the militsia or in the mines. Some pensioners left to live with children elsewhere. Of the female adults, 8 left to get married (traditionally high mobility of women, exodus on marriage); 6 followed their husbands who had found work elsewhere; 11 left to work or study; 2 left to stay with relatives and 1 went to Germany. In 1997 23 women left, 10 were pensioners who went to family elsewhere; 5 followed their husbands; 6 left to work; 1 left to stay with relatives and 1 left to study. That year, 25 men left: 3 were pensioners; 7 went to relatives; 15 left to work. In total : 27% of those who left were pensioners; 44% left to find work; 2% left to study and 27% left to live

with relatives. Of these : those who left to work, 12.5% women and 31.25% men; pensioners 20.8% women and 6.25% men. With relatives women=12.5% and men=14.5%.

Former Sovkhoz Druzhba:

In 1991, the former state farm itself had an active population of 1,130 people, divided between the central village and four *otdeleniye*.

Situation as of 1.1.1998	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*
Total population (*of the rural district as a whole*): Of which:	14,141	6921	7220
1) Population under working age	4666	2371	2295
2) Population of 'pre-pension age' (50+)	370	178	192
3) Pensioners (60+ men)(55+ women)	1564	556	1013
4) Population of working age and capable of work Of which:	7906	3994	3312
Employment figures: People of working age and capable of work currently unemployed: Officially registered as unemployed:	1612 (1685 as of 1.1.1997) 351 *(190 as of as of 1.1.1997)*	863	749
People of working age and capable of work engaged in subsistence agriculture	2586	893	1693
People of working age and capable of work engaged in the formal economy Of which:	3593	2360	1233
State sector	1122	986	136
Private farms	1100	800	300
Small businesses	130	60	70
Self-employed	872	301	57
Religious cults	22	14	8
Other	22	12	10
Demographic trends: Births Deaths Of which those of working age:	 231 112 14		
Mothers of large families	217		
Single mothers	76		
Women on maternity leave	419		
Invalids	346		

N.B. These official figures from the local Akimiat represent the situation as of 1.1.1998 and cover the whole of the wider 'rural community' of which the former Druzhba state farm was a part. There appear to be a number of inconsistencies and discrepancies in the figures, which should be taken as indicative of certain trends rather than totally accurate statistics. From discussions with the administrators responsible for compiling the figures, these inconsistencies seemed to be connected with a number of factors. First, people themselves listed their situations according to different criteria. For example, whereas some people described themselves as 'unemployed' many preferred to describe their situation as being 'self-employed' or as 'working in subsistence agriculture'. In some instances, people

appeared to have been counted in several different categories. Second, as discussed in detail in Chapter 5, figures on the number of people employed in the different branches of the economy, notably the numbers of men and women employed on private farms, were often based on 'ideal' patterns rather than actual practices.

In- and Out-Migration

	From 1.1.1996-31.12.1996 **In-migrants**		From 1.1.1996-1.07.1996 **Out-migrants**	
Number of families	165		-	
Number of family members of which men women	686		-	

	From 1.1.1997-31.07.1997 **In-migrants**		From 1.1.1997-31.07.1997 **Out-migrants**	
Number of families	66		46	
Number of family members of which men women	284 141 143		212 112 100	

	From 1.1.1997-31.07.1997 **In-migrants**		From 1.1.1997-31.07.1997 **Out-migrants**	
Number of families	66		46	
Number of family members of which men women	284 141 143		212 112 100	
People of active working age of which men women	168 92 76		142 80 62	
Nationality Kazak Russian Ukrainian Belorussian Tatar German Uzbek Uighur Dungan Turkish	 234 37 - - 1 1 1 8 - -		 121 55 3 3 - 16 - 13 - -	

Azeri	-		-
Estonian	-		-
Karaetsy	-		-
Karakalpaki	-		-
Korean	-		1
From/to where	From		To
Russia	6		31
Ukraine	-		-
Belorussia	-		14
Karakalpakistan	60		3
Tadjikistan	-		-
Turkmenistan	11		-
Uzbekistan	10		-
Kyrgyzstan	1		-
Azerbaijan	-		-
Tatarstan	-		-
Mongolia	-		-
Turkey	-		-
Germany	-		21
From/to other oblasts in Kazakstan	112 (Shymkent, Semipalatinsk, Kyzl-Orda)		39
Within Almaty oblast	83		104

	From 1.1.1998-25.09.1998 **In-migrants** Including internal migrants	Excluding internal migrants	From 1.1.1998-25.09.1998 **Out-migrants** Including internal migrants	Excluding internal migrants
Number of families	103	55	85	54
Number of family members	395	144	316	142
of which				
men	190	69	160	73
women	205	75	156	69
People of active working age	248	89	205	94
of which				
men	131	50	105	49
women	117	39	100	45
Nationality				
Kazak	353	130	128	28
Russian	21	10	143	87
Ukrainian	-	-	8	8
Belorussian	-	-	-	-
Tatar	-	-	-	-
German	7	4	16	18
Uzbek	-	-	5	-
Uighur	2	-	8	-
Dungan	1	-	1	-
Turkish	3	-	-	-
Azeri	4	-	5	
Estonian	2	-	1	-

Karaetsy	1	-	-	-
Karakalpaki	1	-	-	-
Korean	-	-	1	-
From/to where	*From*		*To*	
Russia	9	9	92	92
Ukraine	-	-	1	1
Belorussia	-	-	-	-
Karakalpakistan	110	110	21	21
Tadjikistan	-	-	-	-
Turkmenistan	10	10	-	-
Uzbekistan	7	7	4	4
Kyrgyzstan	1	1	2	2
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-
Tatarstan	-	-	-	-
Mongolia	-	-	-	-
Turkey	-	-	-	-
Germany	7	7	22	22
From/to other oblasts in Kazakstan	133		43	
Within Almaty oblast	118		131	

N.B. Figures from the local Akimiat. It was only from 1997 that more detailed breakdowns of the figures were available. According to the administrators responsible, the peak of in- and out-migration was between 1990 and 1993, but detailed statistics for this period were no longer available.

APPENDIX 2.

EXTRACTS FROM WORK AND LIFE HISTORIES

The extracts are from work and life histories recorded on the Lenin, Sarybulak, Druzhba and Zhenis state farms between November 1996 and August 1998. My main aim in including them is to highlight and illustrate some of the issues raised in the main body of the text by using people's own words to convey their stories and feelings about their experience. The extracts include both 'synchronic' information on daily life 'as it was' and 'dynamic' information on 'how it happened' (Pahl and Thompson, 1994: 131). Sometimes I asked people explicitly to 'tell me their story'. Sometimes, reminiscences of the past were sparked by my questions about current experience and often people themselves moved between past and present experience. These extracts were therefore often embedded in longer conversations or interviews. On Sarybulak and Zhenis, the stories were told to me either on one occasion or over the space of a few days. On Lenin and Druzhba, I spoke to some people on only one occasion, but to others at different times over the course of several field trips. The style of writing reflects whether the histories were recorded on tape (in which case they are structured as first person narratives) or written up from detailed fieldnotes (in which case they are structured in a combination of first and third person narratives). In all cases, I have chosen to produce a narrative here, rather than reproduce the kind of extremely detailed text that would be used for primary discourse analysis. Some of the conversations were held in Kazak with interpretation in Russian; most were held directly by me in Russian. The translation into English is my own. Where it seemed useful, details about the circumstances in which the story was told and my relationship with the person concerned, have been included.

Oldest Cohort (born between 1915 and 1945)

Ded Petya, Slav, Pensioner, Central Village, Lenin Sovkhoz

He is 73. He worked on the *sovkhoz* as a driver, then as a guard. He and his wife are now retired and live from his pension of 4,000 tenge and hers of 2,000 tenge. War veterans get telephone and light free. And he tells me there is a banquet for war veterans in the nearby town on 9 May, when they are all given 3,000 tenge. Now there are only 9 veterans left in the district – at 73, he is the youngest.

'My parents came here from the Ukraine, as volunteers, in 1909. They were giving land then. We lived over there (points towards the steppe). We had our own farmstead (*khutor*). Maybe 1 hectare, 10 cows and 50 sheep. It was a small village, we were nearly all relatives. There were lots of villages then: 10 km further on, 8 km further, dotted about. Here where the central village is now, there were only 5 or 6 earth houses (*zemlyanki*), over there where the broken down house is. The Kazaks lived in small groups - in winter in *samanki* - primitive earth houses - in summer in yurts.

There were no cars then - that was under Soviet power. We travelled by horse or by ox. There were seven of us in the family. My father died of typhus when I was little. I started work when I was 8 – herding the sheep. Yes there was a school, but we had no money for clothes or shoes. My mother was bringing us all up herself.

Then came the difficult time, when they went after the *kulaks* (rich peasants). My father was dead, so my elder brother served 5 years in prison, near Akmola. It was like a concentration camp. When 1,000 people died, they would carry them away on camels and

bury them in a common grave. But my brother was strong. He was still there - another 1,000 and he was still there. Later he fought, all the way through Austria.

I remember well. I was six years old. We had two wooden buckets of potatoes. The *Chekisti*, the NKVD came, and they took everything, even the old carthorse. My brother and I were on the floor. We knew we were going to go hungry, and tried to take some potatoes, but the man saw us, kicked us so hard up the behind... They even took our last potatoes. Five or six *chekisti* would come – they took everything. That's what they called 'collectivisation'. My mother came here, to the *sovkhoz*, to bake bread for the workers. They shot people too. They would come at night in the black van (*chernyy voron*) and take people away. All were afraid to talk then. That's was Stalin's law - but it was all Beria's fault. He wanted power, but Stalin trusted him. After Stalin's death things got better.

I went to fight when I was 17, in Ukraine and Manchuria. We Russians fought like beasts; we didn't even ask for food. The Germans were armed to the teeth; we only had pitchforks, but we broke their backs. It was terrible.

My wife had to escape with her parents and sister from the Ukraine – they were bombed out. She was the only one to survive. She was sent here, first to 'Kazakstan' *sovkhoz* and then here. We've been married for 50 years. We don't have any children of our own, but we brought up one of my brother's sons.

Last time I was in town was two months ago. We used to live well, under communism. Petrol was cheap. You could get everything you wanted. It's all Gorbachev's fault. If he were here, I would string him up by his feet from that lamp-post.

It is better to work collectively. I couldn't farm now, I'm too old and the fields are too far away. Ask the young people there how they are doing. Maybe it is working well for them. But I can honestly say to you, we lived better then, that's how we lived (gesture of satisfaction).

Tetya Anya, Russian, Pensioner, born 1936, Central Village, Lenin Sovkhoz.

Tetya Anya lives with her husband and two of her grown up, unmarried, sons and one grandson. Her other son, recently divorced, lives nearby. The unmarried sons have set up a private farm, together with a friend. Her husband was present at the beginning of the interview.

She was born in Pavlodar oblast. That was her homeland (*zemlya*). Her father was taken away to serve during the war and was killed and her mother died soon afterwards. [Addressing her husband, she says that they had a very different war. In Kazakstan, the men were all under suspicion of being spies and weren't taken away to fight. In Pavlodar, they only had women left. Her father was taken, then the neighbour. They were all taken one by one.]

She was 7 and went to live with her eldest sister, who was 19 and married to a man much older than herself. His first wife had left him and their two children were living with him. Did her sister love him? What did she know? She never talked about it. The marriage had been arranged by her godmother, a relative of his. She was poor. What else was she to do?

Very soon, her sister had had her first baby and she, aged 8, was his nanny, carrying him around although he was almost as big as she was. By age 9, she was chopping wood

together with her sister's stepdaughter, Yanka. And by 11, she was baking bread and cooking for the family.

Her sister's husband was a difficult man, but he didn't drink. Then it got difficult to feed her – her sister had her own children – and she was sent to an orphanage run by a relative. There it was better. At least they had enough to eat.

From the orphanage, she went to study at an agricultural college and graduated as a zootechnician. The day she graduated, the Director of the orphanage (her relative) bought all the graduees a present and he gave her a beautiful dark blue dress - which she only gave away last year because she couldn't fit into it any more – and a soft blue shawl and a pair of shoes. She had sewed herself a coat with the money she earned on work experience and froze in it when she was sent to Kazakstan, until she got a fur jacket the second Winter. Everybody did work experience at the college. There was a real farm with livestock and grain. They all learned to milk cows. In principle they all learned to operate machinery too, though that never really sunk in. How a pump worked, for instance. How to ride a horse and saddle it up yourself.

She was sent to Kazakstan with her brother for her first job, 42 years ago, to work on one of the otdeleniye (2nd ferma) as a zootechnician. What was it like here then? There was practically nothing here, just some of the houses you see in the central village now. They built up just about everything themselves, by their own efforts. There were just some earth houses (*samanki*) and some barrack type buildings. This house, she and her husband (*ded*) had built themselves.

That first winter, she and her brother lived in a house with an earthen floor – not a wooden one like now. In the North, in Pavlodar, the floors were of wood, but here there was none, so they mixed clay and straw and laid it down. The Kazaks used to cover it with felt from wall to wall, but theirs was just earth. They didn't know they could ask for an advance and nobody told them, so for the whole Winter, they went without. They'd get some food from the storehouse. Later her brother was able to travel to one of the other villages and buy some provisions.

It was mainly a sheep farm then, with some cattle and some fowls. The *fermy* were over by the river (later diverted when they built the Irtysh-Karaganda canal). In the Summer, practically everyone was out on the *zhaylau* and she would be there too, checking the herd numbers with the shepherds. She didn't speak Kazak and they didn't speak Russian – so each did a count in their own language.The outlying villages were nearly all Kazak and the central village nearly all Russian. But Kazaks her age spoke Russian too.

All transport was by horse or ox and she rode everywhere herself, even over to the herds near Plodorovsky. It was scary. Plodorovsky was part of the *zona* (network of labour camps) then. The prisoners were building up the *sovkhoz*. There was barbed wire and watchtowers over by the hills.

In winter, she would go and check the *bazy* (animal stalls) to check how much feed the animals got. Did people think it wasn't women's work? What does that mean, women's work or men's work? The zootechnician before me was a woman too. There were lots of women in agricultural work then. Perhaps we were simpler then, not as 'clever' as people today... What were the Kazak women doing? Quite a lot went to train at the local agricultural college. A lot were 'listed' as assistant shepherds, but what kind of work can you do when you have 10 or 12 children? Just some help maybe at shearing time. They were listed as working, but they were really at home, bringing up the children.

Things were difficult at first, but then year by year it began to get better. They could see the results. A new hospital. The school. Shops selling everything you could wish for. Transport to the town.

Woman pensioner, Kazak, Lenin Otdeleniye, born in 1937

I finished Kazak school. I have six children, five sons and one daughter. The eldest son lives in Karaganda. He's married with two children. The next eldest lives in the *sovkhoz* centre. He lives well. One of the next sons also lives in the centre – he's married to the head of the post office. And another lives in the rayon centre. The two other boys live with us – the youngest has just moved here, a few months ago. All five served in the army, they did good service, the eldest in Czechoslovakia. (*Long silence, broken when I prompted her about her own life.*) I studied in Akmola oblast, in the rayon centre. Then I worked for fifteen years..... Did I work all the time? Yes, yes... I got my pension at 55. (*I asked her if she worked when the children were* small). I had four children, then I worked. (*I asked her why she decided to work then*). Because you needed to work to get a pension. (*I asked her how her husband felt about her working for the sovkhoz*). He allowed it, so long as I could manage to do everything, do all the housework, then that was alright. We always had chickens, cows, sowed tomatoes, potatoes; 60 sacks last year. Now we give the children food, help them out. With cream and butter too. If you don't have a *khozyaistvo*, how would you live? The children living in the city, they need help. The problem now is that there is no *khozyain* on the *sovkhoz*. If you have a *khozyain*, you have everything. If you have no *khozyain*, then everything is a problem. Now you keep chickens, you sell the eggs, the milk, the butter and that's how you live. The traders come, and we get what we need in exchange, sugar, tea, for barter, they come on Saturdays, every Saturday.

Middle Cohort (born 1945-1965)

'Kirghizka', woman shepherd, aged 45, Zhenis sovkhoz, jailoo, 19/7/98

I am an assistant shepherd – I'm always busy. [My husband] is out with the stock all day. I take care of the household work (*zanimayus khozyaistvom*), milk the animals, look after the young ones. My youngest son helps with the cooking; he cooks for his Dad if ever I'm not here. Left to his own devices, my husband would eat only bread. Some men are good - they help to get the water and to light the stove. Others just go out to the steppe and come back and do nothing.

In April or May we go to a place called *Sakhman* for 45 days, for lambing. Then we come here to *Ortyzken*, the jailoo, and in October we go to the zimovka, where there are three families. In the Summer it is horrible there - near the main road. There are two quarries nearby, they're private enterprises now, which have electricity. People work there for 15 day shifts. Of course, it's much better out on the *zhaylau*. What on earth would I do with myself in the *aul*? No, we don't have electric light, or a fridge... But we keep food in the well. Or, for example, we bury products in a bucket inside the yurt. (*They have a yurt and a wagon. Her kitchen is outside. There is a stove for making bread and a second cooker, fired by dung, with two 'rings' and a samovar).*

In winter I'm very busy. I'll have to go soon to whitewash the *zimovka* and get things ready; get the dung (*kizyak*) in for the Winter. Before, we used to get coal from the *sovkhoz*, but we don't any more. Over the winter, I knit socks too and make felt (*koshma*). Out on the steppe, I get headaches that can last 2 or 3 days, because of the sun and the wind.

My husband takes the stock out in the morning, comes back at 2, then goes to the river so that the sheep can have a rest and be washed. He comes home at about 5. There are 1,200 sheep on the *sovkhoz* this year, and 600 new lambs.

I was 'stolen' [into marriage] by her husband from Frunze [now Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan]. All my family are there. I'd never met him before... *(Her husband's brothers and other family members all live on the sovkhoz).*

What happened with privatisation? There was a meeting. All the men went, the shepherds too, but not the women - they had to look after the *khozyaistvo*. People were told that they could split up and take their own share - but nobody wanted to. In other places, everybody's out for themselves. People are selfish and mean. Here, say, if our neighbour needs a tractor, we will help him out. There, on the neighbouring farms, they wouldn't any more. The *sovkhoz* stills sends a truck to help us move; and we get paid still, but not money. We get vermicelli, macaroni, flour, sugar and tea. We have 50 of our own sheep and 3 cows. Last year we had more, but we sold them because the children needed clothes and books for school. When we need to buy something - vegetables, for instance - we sell meat or *kumiss*. Either me or [my eldest son] – he's in 11th grade – go ourselves to sell on the market, or sell to the traders who come here.

So long as we have sheep, everything will be OK. My sons will be shepherds too – a father and a son are like the front and back wheels of a car.'

Sandugash, Kazak, aged 39, Lenin Sovkhoz

When we first got married, I was working in M. earning good money and the *kollektiv* was good, the work was interesting. He was working as a teacher on Lenin. I said, why not move to the town? But he said, no, I have a good job here too. And you know how it is, here anyway, what the man says, goes, and I came here. But his parents interfered all the time. When I first came here, I didn't know Kazak. I could understand it, but not speak, and they were hostile to me because of that. And we were brought up amongst Russians and I'm used to speaking my mind. They hated that too. They said I was badly brought up. How was I supposed to be? Modest. Not speak. Defer to them. But that's not me, I can't live like that.

My husband used to be a teacher of biology, drawing and computers (*informatika*). He was quite senior, but he doesn't want to work. He just sits at home and helps his parents. We don't even have a *khozyaistvo*. People are amazed. But he just can't be bothered. And I can't do everything on my own. He will not do housework. For example, one day, I said, 'why don't you wash the floor while I'm at work?' But he said, 'that's women's work'. But he doesn't even do his 'man's work'. It's proper that when a man gets married, he provides for, feeds and clothes his family. He deals with getting hay, coal and firewood. It's true my husband does chop wood, but he is all mouth. This time last year he kept saying, 'We've got no coal, how are we going to heat the house?' But he didn't actually do anything about it. In the end it was me who had to find transport and go to the mine and get the coal. It's much easier for a man to do deals with other men, isn't it? They can sit down over vodka and

discuss things. It's easier. And it was the same story with the hay. You run, run, look for a car. And the men here, they say, 'why are you running about like a man (*muzhik*)? Don't you have a husband at home'. (Qu. *Don't the other men mock him*?) He doesn't have any friends. He's with his parents all the time. He has no goal in life, he's not striving for anything. My father always told us it was important to set yourself a goal - to study, because you need education to get a good job; a goal, you know, it could be to get a wall-unit (*stenka*) for the home, a new suite of furniture, a car. I said to him, 'Let's save up for a car so we don't have to rely on anybody'. But every time, he'd see something, a pair of boots, whatever, and the money would go. My husband always in the end says, 'Why should I, what do I need it for?'. It's in his blood - he's a Tatar. His parents lived with just a bed and a table'.

Galya, Russian, aged 42, Druzhba

She grew up in the North of Kazakstan and came to the Almaty area after finishing school to work in a cotton factory. Then there was slump in Uzbek cotton production and they put the factory on slow. At this point, she went on maternity leave, then worked at the kindergarten her daughter attended while simultaneously training to be a nurse. After that, she did evening classes and trained as a switchboard operator and got a job for the geological survey, based in a state farm community. Then she worked for the post office, before being made redundant. She worked for a while for a private cafe, but had left. She was eager to talk about her previous jobs, but very cagey about her current situation, except to say that whilst she tried to sell her flat in the city and buy a house in Druzhba, she was living there with her cousin and 'helping'. She also 'helped' one of the women farmers to pick and sort potatoes and this conversation took place as she was 'helping' her to make preserves and pickles for the Winter.

'There were thousands of jobs for women in Almaty then. Now look at the situation. I sold pies in a new private cafe for a while, but then I broke my leg and had to stop work. The owner tried to cheat me at first. He was an old man, a Turk, and I thought he'd be OK, respectable. But he tried to claim that 20 pies had gone missing and that it was my fault. I said to him, 'look at my work book – I've been responsible for budgets of thousands of roubles, and you think I'm going to steal 20 pies? You can try that on with a girl of 15, but don't try that kind of stuff with me'. Well, he apologised, said he must have made a mistake himself... And I carried on working for him. When I left, he complained that his takings and his customers were down...

When I worked for the geologists, we'd be away for several months of the year, on expedition. We did aerial photos, all over Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, and I was responsible for communications and for the cooking. It was a 'men's collective'. They were all solid guys, but they respected me. I still have the scar on my leg from where I was bitten by a snake in the desert and the team leader cut it open... I've seen poisonous snakes, tarantulas – their colour is different depending which soil they live in, reddish brown, rich black or striped.

At the kindergarten, I used to take one of the little boys home with me every night, when the creche was closed. It was always me who stayed behind late. I was trained as a nurse. Anything could happen. He (the little boy) lived with his grandmother and she worked nights as a watchwoman so he came home with me, slept on my couch. I got into trouble with my boss over it. She wanted me to take the child of one of her own relatives. But I stood firm. I saw her recently, and remembered.

At the post office, it was always busy, there were always customers. I knew everyone, I have a memory like a telephone book. A man would walk in, and I would have dialled the number he wanted before he even said a word. 'Go on, you're through, the time's ticking away already'. The other woman was always doing her nails, having tea. She complained that everyone always came to me, because I was young and lively and did things fast... I worked spells – my parcels always got through, never got lost, were always on time.

I'm not afraid of living alone. I have done for the past 17 years. I came home one day and found my husband in bed with another woman. He didn't expect me back, but they were poisoning cockroaches in the office and sent everyone home... I told him straight off to get out, not come back. And I didn't take him back either.

I'm happy so long as I'm busy, so long as I'm doing something. But what work is there now for us women over 40? The ads all ask for knowledge of computers – or for slim women with long legs...'

The Youngest Cohort (born after 1965)

Fatima's daughter-in-law, Sarybulak

One of Fatima's daughters had been 'stolen' the night before and this story was told to me during a feast held to mark this occasion. She began by telling me that she had also been 'stolen' with her agreement. Then something seemed to boil over in her, she took me to one side and began to tell me another story.

Her husband had 'stolen' her from the city in the middle of Winter and taken her on a lorry to the sands (*peski*), where the family was pasturing the stock, many kilometres away. She had protested, she had begged him, pleaded with him to take her back, to let her out. Later, many hours from the city, in the middle of the steppe, he had stopped the lorry and said 'So you want to get out do you? Go on then!'. He had mocked her.

She had been studying to be a vet, in Dzhezkazgan. She had had only two terms to go before her final exams. She had wanted to work hard, to qualify. She and her (now) husband had been seeing each other for some time. It had been serious. But she had not been ready to get married.

When they arrived at the *zimovka* of her parents-in-law, what could she do? She was angry, but it would have been shameful (*stydno*) to show anger in front of her father-in-law and mother-in-law. (By tradition she could not even address them by name). She was stony cold to her husband for as long as she could, but he had just laughed and said, '*Are you going to stay angry with me all the time? How long do you think you can keep it up? Forever?*'. And he was right, there was no escape. Where would she have gone?

She had plucked up the courage to ask her father-in-law if she could go back to the city to finish her studies. But he had refused – she might not come back, she might *gulyat'* (see other men) and shame the family name, his son had to stay and work on the *zimovka* so she had to stay too. His word was final. She got pregnant in the first week. By the time her parents had come, she was unmistakeably pregnant.

She is still angry with her husband. She cannot make peace with him, it is her temperament. She is like that (*she says this with a mixture of defiance and culpability).* She wants to divorce him. She still has a flat in the city from her student days. Her mother-in-law does not want her to go. She says they need her, they will miss her, that she is the only

worthwhile *snokha* (daughter-in-law). She does not want to go to the *zhaylau*. It is dull and boring. There is no electricity. There nearest neighbours are five kilometres away. She has already had 5 years of this kind of life and it is enough... She doesn't know what she will do.

Asel', Kazak, Lenin sovkhoz, 3rd otdeleniye

She would like to go on and do further study - but the financial situation is difficult now. 'Before, if your grades were good, you could be sure you would get a place. But now, it depends on having the money or connections. You even need to pay to pass exams'.

Her sister had stayed at home for a year after school to help with the *khozyaistvo*. There's only one brother, and he is older and married with children. Both her parents are retired and can't cope on their own. They have 4 cows and 4 calves and 2 small ones, 26 sheep (it was 28 but they just slaughtered one to give to relatives) plus hens and ducks. They used to have a lot of geese too, but for some reason this year they weren't fattening properly so they slaughtered them. Winter is the time when there's most work. In Summer, the animals are just put out to pasture, but in winter they have to be given hay and the sarai has to be mucked out... there's so much muck.

She prefers the *aul* to the *sovkhoz*. It's much more beautiful - there are the hills really close and the river too. There's been less and less water over the past few years, although there are still some deep places where you can swim. There's more to do. People come visiting. But in the town, it's probably better. Her sister wanted to study too, but it's just not possible. She's working in a private bakery in town now - but it's really tough. She actually does the baking and it's hot and stuffy. Another sister sells bread - that's much easier. 'The girls who get married when they're still at school? No they're not my friends, they're a couple of classes ahead of me. It's stupid. They're stuck here now. They won't see anything of life.'

APPENDIX 3

Selective List of Legislation on Agrarian Reform and Farm Restructuring

Source, Final Report for ADB T.A. Project No. 2356, Strengthening the Implementation of Agricultural Sector Reforms, Volume 1, Main Report, September 1996: 23. Danagro Adviser a/s in association with Landell Mills Ltd. for the Asian Development Bank.

1. Resolution 402 of the Government, April 1996, About Procedures for Providing Land Plots to Citizens and Legal Entities
2. Resolution 402 of the Government, April 1996, About Distribution of Certificates on the Right of Land Plot Ownership and the Right of Permanent Land Use Among Citizens and Legal Entities;
3. Resolution 403 of the Government, April 1996, About Establishing of the Regulation on Procedures of Application and Redemption of Land Plots for State Needs
4. Edict of the President, December 22 1995, Concerning Land
5. Civil Code of the Republic of Kazakstan, December 1994
6. Resolution 625 of the Cabinet of Ministers, June 14 1994, Concerning the Approval of the Procedure for the Purchase and Sale by the Citizens and Legal Entities of the Republic of Kazakstan of the Right to Life Hereditary Tenure, the Right to Use or the Right to Lease Land Plots.
7. Edict of the President, April 5 1994, Concerning Further Improvement of Land Relations
8. Edict of the President, January 24 1994, Concerning Certain Issues of Regulating Land Relations
9. Law of the Republic of Kazakstan, 1992, Concerning the Introduction of Amendments and Additions to the Land Code of the Kazakh SSR, the laws of the Kazakh SSR 'Concerning Land Reform in the Kazakh SSR', 'Concerning Peasant Farms in the Kazakh SSR' and the Law of the Republic of Kazakstan 'Concerning Privatisation of Assets of State-Owned Agricultural Enterprises'
10. Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR, June 1991, Regarding the Procedure for the Implementation of the Law of the Kazakh SSR 'Concerning the Land Reform in the Kazakh SSR'
11. Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR, February 13 1991, Concerning the Implementation of the Land Code of the Kazakh SSR.

APPENDIX 4

STATISTICS ON FARM PRIVATISATION

1) NATIONAL LEVEL

1.1.Transformation of Sovkhozes into New Farming Enterprises: 1992-1995

Years	*Total of privatised* sovkhozes	*New enterprises formed* *Total*	*Collective Enterprises*	*Joint Stock Companies*	*Farming Partnerships*	*Co-operatives*	*Small Enterprises*	*Peasant Farms*
1992	*972*	*1938*	*794*			*99*	*358*	*762*
1993	*130*	*159*	*64*	*30*	*7*	*15*	*12*	*31*
1994	*761*	*3207*	*53*	*220*	*52*	*344*	*1950*	*588*
1995	*469*	*746*	*229*	*72*	*134*	*86*	*15*	*210*
Total		*6050*	*1140*	*367*	*193*	*544*	*2335*	*1591*

Source: Goskomstat
Cited in Final Report for ADB T.A. Project No. 2356, Strengthening the Implementation of Agricultural Sector Reforms, Volume 1, Main Report, September 1996: 30. Danagro Adviser a/s in association with Landell Mills Ltd. for the Asian Development Bank.

Notes:

1) In 1996, the ratio of peasant farms to privatised sovkhozes fell well below the average for the total period 1992-1995.
2) The category of small agricultural enterprises largely represents enterprises formed around structural units of former state farms and are, in fact, another form of collective enterprise.
3) At this time, most kolkhozes had not yet changed status.

1.2. Number and Area of Peasant Farms, 1990-1995

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Number of peasant farms a/	*324*	*3,333*	*9,262*	*16,283*	*22,325*	*31,055*
Total area of farms (000) ha	-	*1,083*	*4,936*	*6,471*	*7,828*	*13,317*
Average size of farm, ha	-	*325*	*533*	*397*	*350*	*428*

Source: Final Report for ADB T.A. Project No. 2356, September 1996: 28

Notes:

1) The average size of peasant farms varies widely. In steppe areas they may average 400 hectares but almost all the land will be permanent pasture. In irrigated areas, the average size is nearer 40 hectares and close to cities farms may be as small as 4 hectares.

1.3. Size Structure of Peasant Farms

Farm size range, ha	*Percentage of peasant farms*	*Percentage of total area of peasant farms*
< 5	*20*	*neg*
5-10	*10*	*neg*
10-35	*15*	*1*
35-100	*18*	*3*
100-200	*11*	*4*
200-500	*11*	*8*
500-1000	*6*	*10*
> 1000	*9*	*74*
Total	***100***	***100***

Source: Goskomstat, cited Final Report for ADB T.A. Project No. 2356, September 1996: 29
Neg. = negligible

2) FIELDWORK COMMUNITIES

2.1. Karaganda Oblast': State farms largely opted to remain as large entities; relatively few

private farms.

(Situation in August 1997: based on interview and statistical material from the oblast' agricultural administration)

Karaganda *Oblast*: 3,757 private (peasant) farms, 1,020 with *Gos Akt na Zemlyu* and 956 with *Patent.* Data not disaggregated by gender and exact figures for number of farms headed by women unavailable. My informant, a civil servant from the province's agricultural administration, knew of only one farm where a woman was registered as the head.

Lenin *Rayon*: 11 former state farms, re-organised into cooperatives and joint stock companies
173 private farms registered, of which 125 had a *Gos Akt* and 11 had gone through the full ownership registration and certification process
In the *rayon* as a whole, no women had been registered as heads of private farms.

Lenin *Sovkhoz*: Farm reorganised as a joint stock company (A.O.)
5 private farms created
No female-headed farms

2.2. Zhezkazgan Oblast': Selected at Ministerial level in 1992 as a pilot region for farm privatisation; the majority of state farms restructured completely into smaller enterprises.

(Situation in August 1998, based on interviews with rayon agricultural administration and village Akimiat)

Sarybulak *Rayon*: All but one state farm totally reorganised (the exception was a special breed centre, which first remained as state property, then became a joint stock company in which half the shares were held by the state).

Sarybulak *Sovkhoz*: The *sovkhoz* split into 52 private farms and small enterprises. No farms officially headed by women, but de facto at least three women were running farms.

2.3. Almaty Oblast': Privatisation produced a relatively large number of small private farms, but there was wide variation between the different *rayons*.

Oblast: (Nov. 1995): 90 of the original 123 state farms had been restructured, leading to the creation of 39 joint stock companies, 64 small enterprises and 3794 private farms[241].

Rayons:
Druzbha's *Rayon*: (1998) over half of the state farms radically restructured.
Dzhambul *Rayon:* Most farms restructured into cooperatives and joint stock companies.

Druzhba *sovkhoz*:

1989 – First 'private farmers' (*arendatory*) leased land from the *sovkhoz*;

1990 – They and others entitled to take land and set up private (peasant) farms (*krestyanskie khozyaistvo*); by 1994, there were 41 such farms.

1994 – One of the first of the *rayon's* state farms to opt for radical restructuring:
sovkhoz divides into 7 producer co-operatives based on the former *otdeleniye* and 27 *krestyan'skie khozyaistva.*
The land distribution model gives all shareholders *demarcated* land plots rather than merely paper shares.

1996 – All but one of the cooperatives split into associations of private farms and family farms.

1998 – 434 private farms registered, of which 40 officially headed by women.

1998 – Two contrasting tendencies:
1) further splitting of family farms into smaller units (i.e. farms based on the extended family into farms run by individual households;
2) agglomeration of family farms into larger units, such as associations.

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[241] Figures from TACIS project "Support to Private Farmers and Cooperatives".

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FIELD RESEARCH

1. Formal Interviews

1.1. Pilot Trip : October-December 1996

Chief Accountant of Lenin Collective Farm, Dzambulskii raion

Country Director of Mercy Corps International

Head of the Regional Board of Agriculture of Almaty

Head of Dzuldiz Independent Farmers' Association

Project Director, Food Systems Restructuring Project, Agricultural Co-operative Development International

Regional Director of the Winrock International Farmer-to-Farmer Program

Representative from TACIS Project DKA 9203, 'Support to Private Farmers and Co-operatives in the Almaty and Taldykurgan regions, (Attendance of end of project seminar, 6/2/96).

Representative from TACIS Project 'Pilot Projects in Agricultural Enterprises in Animal Production and Fresh Produce Sector'

Representative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) in Kazakhstan

UNDP WID Programme Officer

1.2 Second Field Research Visit : October - December 1996.

Interview with Professor Bektorganova and Kudrat Dzhamalov, Association of Sociologists and Political Scientists of Kazakstan.

Interview with Meral Akkent, Turkish sociologist.

Interview with Craig VanDevelde, Regional Director, Winrock International Farmer-to Farmer Program.

Interview with Daulat Chunkanov, Project Officer, Winrock International Farmer-to-Farmer Program.

Interview with Robert Kossman and J.D. Von Pischke, Enterprise Development and Financial Services Group, D.A.I (Development Alternatives International), contractor for Asian Development Bank (working on rural credit project).

Interview with Mike St Martin, consultant, D.A.I.

Interview with Ben Steinberg, Regional Director VOCA.

Interview with Raushan Kryldakova, local representative of HIVOS organisation.

Interview with outgoing WID development officer, UNDP.

Interview with incoming WID development officer, UNDP.

Interview with Chris Osakwe, advisor to the President on legal reform.

Interview with representative of CASDIN (NGO support organisation).

Interview with Leonard Klein, Regional Director of Counterpart Consortium, USAID Contractor working on NGO development.

Interview with Mansiya Kainazarova, NGO development officer, Counterpart Consortium.

Interviews with members of 'Shiragin' Women's Association.

Interview with Head of Women and Law Association.

Participant observation, meeting of 'Delovye Zhenshchiny' (women's NGO)

Participant observation, International AIDS Day Meeting.

Participant observation, UNDP, meeting of women's NGOs.

Participant observation, meeting of Shiragin Women's Association and USAID representatives.

Interviews with farm women on 'Luch Vostoka' former sovkhoz, Almatinskii oblast, (visit with representatives from TACIS 'Pilot Projects in Agricultural Enterprises in Animal Production and Fresh Produce Sector').

Interviews with farm workers on 'Dzhetiginskii' former sovkhoz, (visit with representatives from TACIS 'Pilot Projects in Agricultural Enterprises in Animal Production and Fresh Produce Sector').

Interviews with women workers at milk processing plant, near Dzhetiginskii former Sovkhoz.

Participant observation of meeting of association of farmers and representatives of TACIS Farmer Support Program, Chemolgan, Kaskelen Raion.

Interviews with women farmers, Chemolgan, Kaskelen Raion.

Interview with rural women from Semipalatinsk Oblast, taking part in HIVOS project.

1.3 Third Field Research Visit : May – December 1997

Interviews and participant observation with representatives of TACIS projects 'Pilot Projects in Agricultural Enterprises in Animal Production and Fresh Produce Sector' and 'Farmer Support Program' projects.

Interviews with UNDP gender and development representative.

Kyrgyzstan

Interview with consultant with World Bank Poverty Alleviation Programme, Bishkek.

Interview with representative of Swiss-Kyrgyz Forestry Project, Bishkek.

Initial and follow-up interview with director of UNDP Women and Development National Bureau, Bishkek. Participant observation in the Bureau.

Interview with representative of Counterpart Consortium, Bishkek.

Interview with representative of TACIS Co-Ordination Unit, Bishkek.

Interview with representatives of HIVOS office, Bishkek.

Participant observation, herding families, Song Kul Lake.

Interview and participant observation with members of the "Shoola" women's NGO, Bokonbaevo village, Tonskii Rayon, Issk-kul oblast.

Interview with head of women's NGO 'Soyuz Sel'skikh Zhenshchin', Ion Bulak village, Issk Kul oblast.

Talk with women in the fields, Ion Bulak village.

Participation in seminar 'Institutsional'noe razvitie zhenskikh nepravitel'stvennykh organizatsii' organised by Forum zhenskikh nepravitel'svtvennykh organisatsii Kyrgystana, 11 July 1997.